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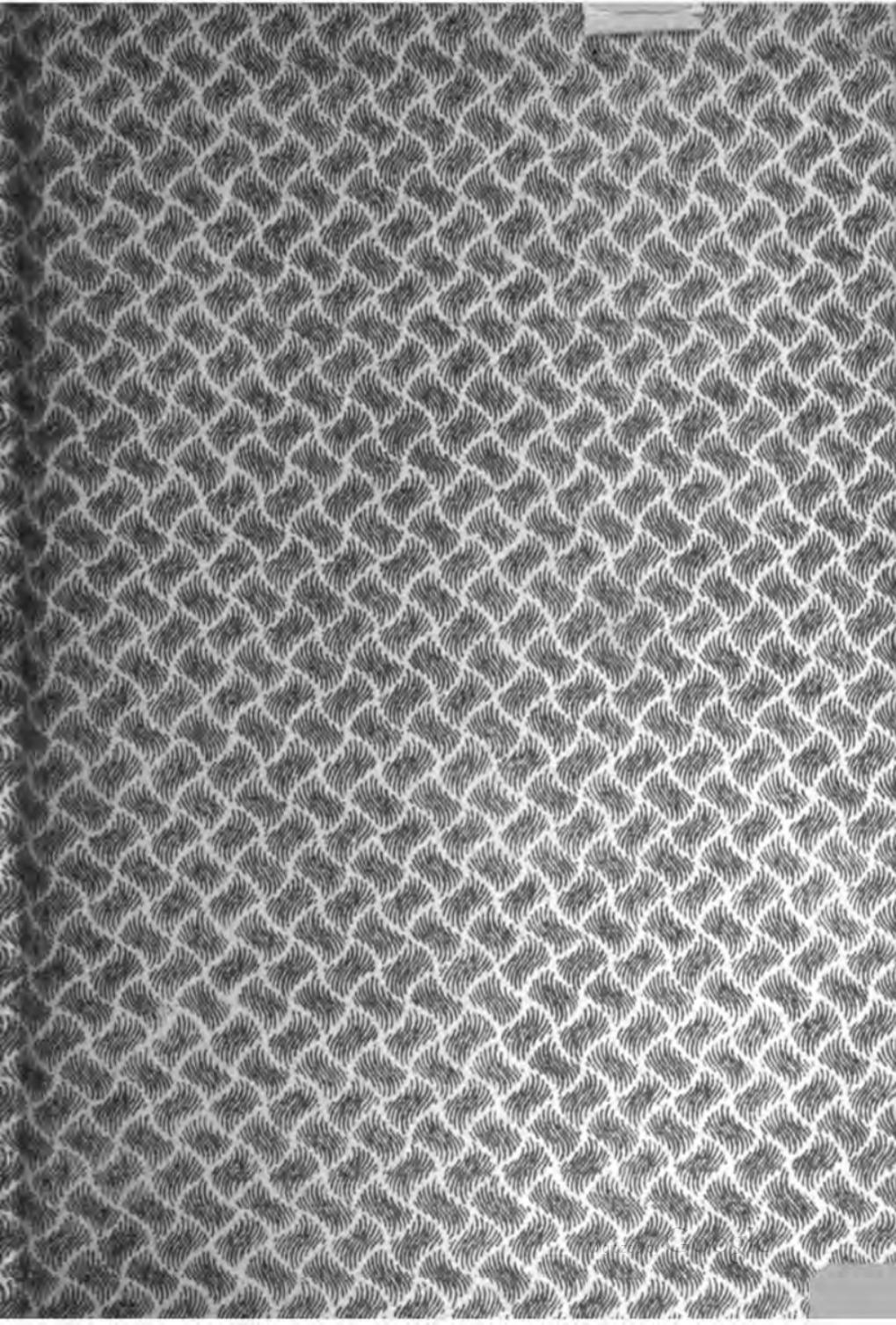
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PICTURES IN UMBRIA

TRAVEL BOOKS BY
THE SAME WRITER.

THROUGH NORMANDY.

THROUGH BRITTANY.

PICTURES AND LEGENDS FROM
NORMANDY AND BRITTANY.

IN THE ARDENNES.

ABOUT YORKSHIRE.

IN THE VOLCANIC EIFEL WITH
GILBERT S. MACQUOID.

IN PARIS WITH GILBERT S.
MACQUOID.

ILLUSTRATED BY
THOMAS R. MACQUOID, R.I.



VIA APPIA

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TURES IN UMBRIA

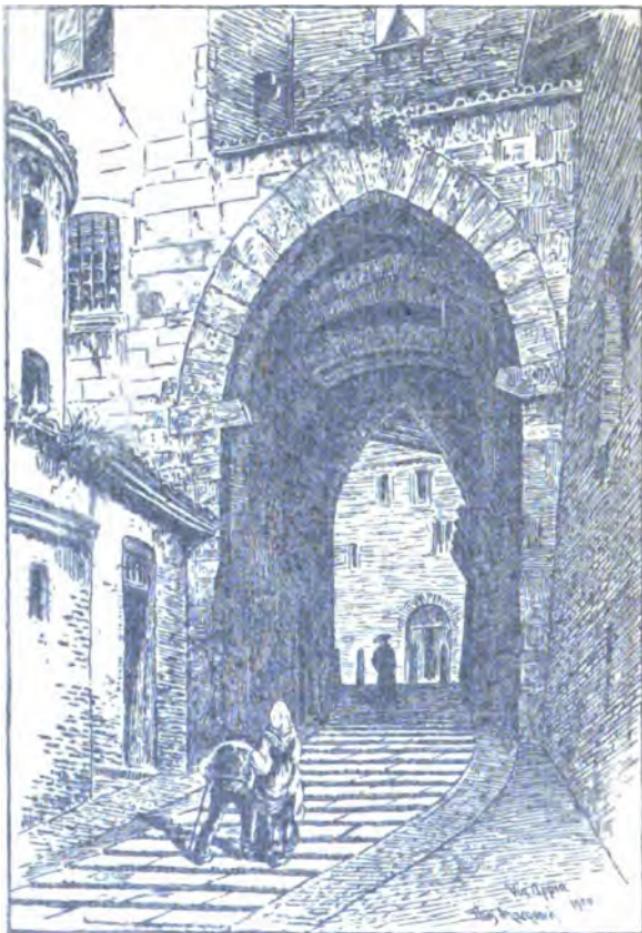
KATHARINE S. MACQUOID

WITH FIFTY ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS

BY THOMAS R. MACQUOID, R.I.



NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
LONDON: T. WERNER LAURIE
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VIA APPIA

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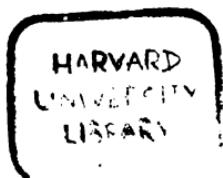


NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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*Fertile costa d'alto monte pende,
Onde Perugia sente freddo e caldo
Da Porta Sole, . . .*

*Di quella costa là, dov'ella frange
Più sua ratterza, nacque al mondo un Sole,
Come fa questo tal volta di Gange.
Però chi d'esso loco fa parole,
Non dica Ascesi, chè direbbe corto,
Ma Oriente, se proprio dir vuole.
Non era ancor molto lontan dall'orto,
Chè cominciò a far sentir la terra
Della sua gran virtude alcun conforto.*

"Del Paradiso," Canto XI.

DISCARDED

To

ARCHIBALD EARL OF ROSEBERY, K.G.

WHO HAS KINDLY PERMITTED US
TO OFFER HIM THE DEDICATION
OF THIS BOOK

THOMAS R. AND KATHARINE S. MACQUOID

April 1905

64997

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NOTE

OUR book treats of a few of the Hill-cities of Umbria, but it does not attempt exhaustive detail in regard to Perugia, Assisi, or any other.

Several old contemporary writers have greatly helped the book, notably the delightful chronicler Matarazzo, and some of his fellows; besides the "Legend of the Three Companions," and the very quaint "Fioretti di San Francesco."

"The Life of San Bernardino of Siena," by Pierre Clément, was also very useful. In the book itself I speak of the great enjoyment I found in Monsieur Paul Sabbatier's thoughtful "Vie de Saint Francois d'Assisi," and in Miss Lina Duff Gordon's charming "Story of Assisi."

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

THE EDGE, TOOTING COMMON
April 1905

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

CHAPTER I

AN ANCIENT HILL-CITY

IT has been said that the face which exercises most permanent charm is the face whose attractions defy analysis; one in which beauty is subtle, compounded of many and varied qualities, so that, gazing at the harmonious whole, it is impossible to specialise its fascination.

Such a face will not, at first, reveal its charm, for much of this does not lie only in regularity of feature, or in beauty of colouring, nor even in the trick of a smile; the spell is so potent, that when one at last tries to find

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

out its secret, the mind refuses to dispel the sweet illusion by any such work-a-day process, and agrees with the hasheesh smoker, "to enjoy the sweet dream while it lasts."

Places, as well as faces, exert this undefined attraction, but in the former, association often intrudes itself, a conscious ingredient in the witchery they possess for us.

I am just now thinking of a city where much of the historic association is repulsive, even horrible; looking at the old grey walls of Perugia, the mind strays backward, to times when these ancient palaces with barred lower windows were gloomy fortresses, in which ghastly tragedies were acted over and over again.

In some of the old houses dissolute sons plotted how to murder their fathers and brothers, how to commit every sort of crime; blood has run like water in the grass-grown streets and piazzas,—and not only with the blood of an Oddi,

AN ANCIENT HILL-CITY

shed by a fierce Baglione, the two leading families always fighting for power in their city : the one party being Guelph, and the other Ghibelline.

There was even worse strife than this : at times near and dear kinsmen fought hand to hand in the constant brawls of Perugia ; murder was done in the churches, even before the high altar of the cathedral.

Softer, quainter memories, however, linger in this hill-throned and hill-girdled city, and permeate the atmosphere, in spite of the “ reek of blood ” which, a poet once told me, “ taints Perugia.”

Up the brick-stepped way, beneath a tall dark arch, came, even in those years of rapine and murder, the grave Urbino painter, Giovanni Sanzio, with his fair-haired son, Raffaelle. Giovanni came to Perugia to place the lad with the illiterate genius of Città del Pieve, Pietro Vannucci, whose praise was in every one’s mouth, and who had already

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

set up a school and was ranked a great painter. The Perugians still fondly call him “*il nostro Perugino.*” It is said that Pietro was born in the ancient hill-city.

One feels sure that Raffaelle must have been petted and tenderly loved. The father and son made a striking picture as they came from the dark archway into the sunlight,—Raffaelle mounted on his mule, his dainty locks falling over his shoulders in glossy waves of brightness.

Years before he came, the sun saw a very different picture, when poor, roughly clad, coarse-featured Cristoforo Vannucci came trudging along on foot from Città del Pieve, holding the red fist of his little son, Pietro. The square-faced, square-headed boy was only eleven years old, yet his father already firmly believed in his genius, and had brought him all the way from Città del Pieve to present him to the great Umbrian master, Bene-

AN ANCIENT HILL-CITY

detto Bonfigli, who was then at work on the famous frescoes still to be seen in the Palazzo Pubblico of Perugia. There are, both in the Sala del Cambio and elsewhere in the city, proofs that Raffaelle actually worked here, and that he studied under Perugino with Pinturicchio, Lo Spagna, Eusebio di San Giorgio, and the great master's other pupils.

One learns in Perugia how the student from Città del Pieve raised the tone and widened the scope of the existing Umbrian school, and gave to it a grace and ease, to say nothing of higher qualities, which have rarely been excelled. Yet, except in the frescoes of the beautiful Sala del Cambio, much of Perugino's best work is to be found elsewhere, rather than in the town wherein he established his academy, and from which he took his name as a painter.

The southern side of the city holds a still more absorbing association in the

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

gate near the old church and convent of San Pietro de Casinensi ; for by this gate is the way to Assisi, and it has often been trodden by Francesco Bernardone and his disciples.

But I am straying from my text : the mysterious fascination which the grey old city on the hill has for those who linger in it.

I have been told that some travellers " do " Perugia in six hours, or between trains ; I have heard the Via Appia compared with the Holborn Viaduct ; but these travellers do not come under the spell of the place ; they see only an old city, part Etruscan, part Roman, chiefly mediæval, perched on top of a hill, girt with massive walls which look down thirteen hundred feet and more, to the fertile valley of the Tiber.

The steep slopes as they descend are in summer-time silver with olive-groves, golden with plots of maize ; later on they are studies of golden-green and

AN ANCIENT HILL-CITY

yellow, with richly festooned vines laden with fruit.

These rapid travellers may, perhaps, admire the triple ranges of purple Apennines that on every side form a varied background to this picturesque fertility, and to the lesser hills below them, spurs projecting boldly forward into the deep valley, above which the old city shows her towers and massive walls ; they will, perhaps, notice, as they go downhill again, how quaintly the wall is carried in and out, starwise, as it follows the indentations of the hills, and how boldly at each projecting angle a warmly tinted tower stands out against the sky. They can hardly fail to observe these salient features ; but they will not have time to study the varied form of each hill, or to watch the sun set opposite grand old Monte Subasio.

That is a sight worth going far to see ; the intense glow dyes the white houses of Assisi as they cling to the

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

mountain-side, a pale rose against the flame-like orange tint that seems to burn in the very heart of Subasio, rather than to be reflected from the opposite side of the horizon.

And the hurrying travellers will not have time to enjoy the charming drives among the olives in the valley, or to visit the many places of interest which can be reached from Perugia. They go home, and say, "Oh yes, we saw Perugia,—a dull old city, without a shop worth looking into."

A part of the indescribable fascination of the place is felt in long wanderings through the narrow streets, often deeply shadowed by tall palaces with grated windows and bricked-up doorways.

Come with me under a lofty archway, made with uncemented stones on either side, so huge that surely giants must have placed them in position. Now we are in a vaulted way, beneath ancient houses built over the street; these archways are frequent,

AN ANCIENT HILL-CITY

sometimes low - browed and round-headed, mere tunnels through which one almost gropes one's way, and finds at the farther end a sudden descent down a flight of half-ruined brick steps, which turn so quickly that a keen interest insists they must be followed to the end. Sometimes the arch is Etruscan, tall and pointed, and instead of a descent, steps go upwards to another lofty archway with a darkness beyond it that still beckons on the explorer.

Day after day I have wandered up and down those twisting, hilly streets, often losing my way, and as often stumbling upon some fresh interest ; some portion of Etruscan wall, or some exquisite point of view ; a vista at the far-off end of a street, and often when this is arrived at, a grander and more varied picture, with part of Perugia for foreground.

One may easily lose one's way in Perugia. At first the city seemed to

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

us a hopeless maze of twisting streets; but after a little we succeeded in realising the peculiarity of its form. It is said to be that of a star; but it is more like a lobster, with its head on one side, and outstretched tail and claws; or it is like a comet with star-shaped sides, the head on its long neck inclined westward, and a longer tail pointing south-east.

A great charm for those who stay in this city is the comfortable, home-like resting-place to be found in the Hotel Brufani. On our first visit this hotel was in progress of erection, but its predecessor existed in the house on the spur of the hill, outside the city gates. We have been told that the Albergo di Belle Arti is both very comfortable and moderate.

I shall not soon forget the delight of that first arrival.

The heat was so intense in Tuscany that we could not travel in daytime, so we left Florence at night, and had

AN ANCIENT HILL-CITY

a dull, sleepy journey, arriving at Perugia towards morning.

As we came into the hall and the long corridor of the hotel, the dim light fell mysteriously on plants and flowers, showing curios on the wall behind them; to our joy, when we reached our charming cool room and opened the persiennes, we saw the exquisite light of early morning crowning the dim, far-off hills.

The day dawned golden with sunshine, the air breathed a delightful freshness. We strolled into the garden, which had at one end two majestic aloes in full bloom and a group of sun-flowers. Oleanders, covered with rosy blossoms, stood at the garden entrance; beyond was a bower of golden-green acacias, wreathed to their topmost branches with blue and white morning glories; below us we saw a varied landscape, the distant hills tinted with delicate morning light.

We found our quarters delightful, and

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

our host and hostess full of attentive kindness. This was continued when the hotel removed to its present quarters in the large house at the beginning of the city. The views from the Brufani Hotel terrace and windows are superb ; they command both the Val di Tevere and several points of the town itself.

Alas ! both our good hosts, Signor and Madame Brufani, have passed away, but the well-arranged house remains, and is said to be very comfortable still.



ALOES IN BLOOM.

CHAPTER II

MARKET-DAY IN PERUGIA



RAFFAELLE.

THE day after our arrival we went up some steps near the hotel, bordered by aloes not yet in bloom, and gemmed with brilliant-eyed lizards darting in and out in the sunshine ; presently we found ourselves under the lofty walls that once supported the fortress built by command of Pope Paul III., on the site of the Baglioni palaces. In this wall is bricked up an ancient Etruscan gate—the Porta Marzia, which came in the way of this erection.

One is glad, for the sake of freedom, to think that not so many years ago the citizens of Perugia pulled down

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

and utterly destroyed this hated fortress, set up by the tyrant Pope when the hill-city submitted to his dominion.

From a picturesque point of view, the fortress was probably more in harmony with the old streets behind it, especially with the frowning walls, than are the modern buildings that now border the new Piazza Vittor Emanuele, and take off the charm of approach on this side.

One need not, however, enter Perugia by way of Piazza Vittor Emanuele. Keeping below the huge wall, beside an avenue of green acacias, we climbed by a wide flight of shallow brick steps past the picturesque church of San Ercolano, then went through a lofty archway, with huge projecting imposts, into a street with tall, grey houses on either side.

One of these was evidently the back of a palace, and indeed it forms part of the Palazzo Baglione which fronts the next street, Via Riario; the very name

MARKET-DAY IN PERUGIA

Baglione made one shiver, remembering the chronicles of that bloodthirsty race.

We halted here before a shop, to its owner, a well-to-do merchant of Perugia, we had been given an introduction; he most courteously offered to show us his wine cellar, in which is a portion of the veritable Etruscan wall of Perugia, in excellent preservation. Some of the stones are about thirteen feet long and eighteen inches thick, huge uncemented blocks of travertine. The floor of the cellar is formed by the ancient way, so that one actually treads the road used by Etruscans before Rome was thought of!

The amount of forced labour represented by these walls of Perugia is painful to think of, for the stones in the merchant's cellar must have been brought from a very great distance. The blocks of travertine are certainly the finest specimens we saw in the city. The old wall went on from them by way of the Porta Marzia to the Porta Eburnea,

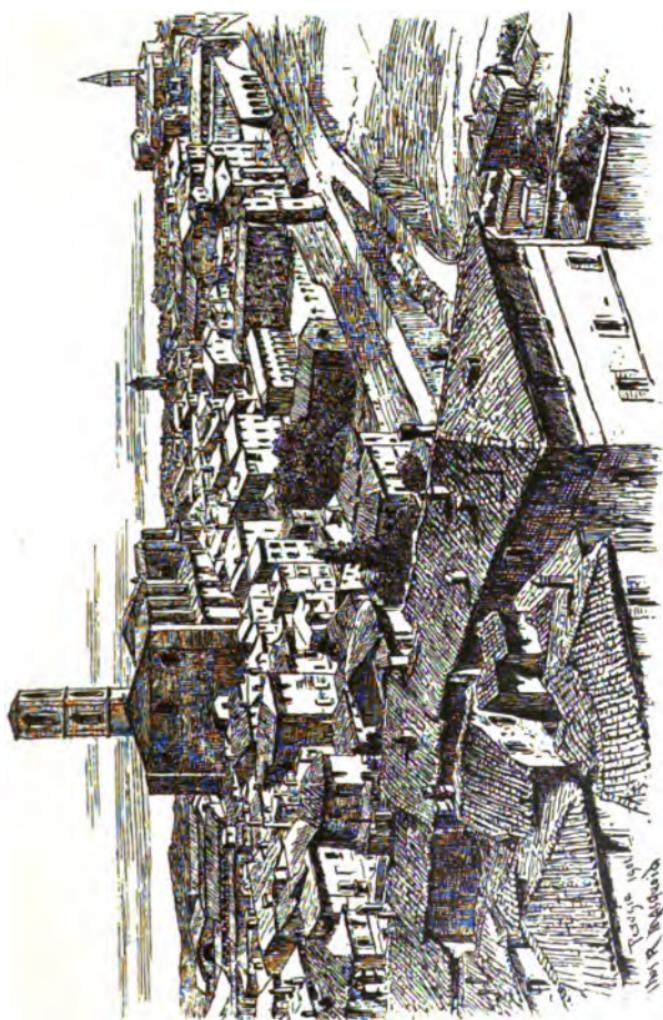
PICTURES IN UMBRIA

then northwards (there are visible fragments of it in the Rione Eburnea) till it reached the famous arch near the Piazza Grimani, and so on eastward to Monte Sole, where it took a southern course again, to join the remains in Signor Betti's cellar.

The house stands on the edge of the hill, and from its back windows there is an extended view over the country on that side, and, looking south, over the garden of San Pietro de Casinensi, then kept in order by the boys of the reformatory. The fine old machicolated spire of San Pietro and the quaint campanile of San Domenico are striking landmarks from the high road winding out to the Tiber and Ponte San Giovanni.

We discovered one secret in the charm of Perugia when we turned from this lovely and varied landscape to the vivid contrast offered by the old grey street.

Near to Signor Betti's house is a little curiosity shop, and in its window



SAN DOMENICO
PERUGIA

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MARKET-DAY IN PERUGIA

was a proof that the belief in "mal occhio" still exists among the peasants. Hanging from a rough brass watch chain, much the worse for wear, was a little bunch of hairs from a horse's tail, set as a charm, and considered to be a specific against "mal occhio," or any spell cast on horses, cows, etc. Near it was an irregular, stumpy bit of coral, a man's safeguard against a like disaster.

During our stay in Perugia we made acquaintance with Signor Bellucci, a very learned and courteous professor of the university, who most kindly showed us in his rooms, not only a very interesting and valuable collection of implements and other articles, beginning at the Stone Age, but also a collection of amulets and charms. Some of these, especially those for protection from lightning, are bits of prehistoric stones, and exhibit a grotesque mingling of pagan and mediæval superstition.

A little case embroidered with the Agnus Dei contained a triangular stone

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

arrow-head, and this, the Professor said, used to be hung at the bed-head of the owner, between pictures of saints ; on the occasion of a storm, candles were lighted, and prayers were offered before the amulet.

This collection of charms amounts to nearly two hundred specimens ; it is full of interest, and it would require many pages to do it justice.

A very curious amulet was the fragment of a human skull enclosed in a little brass reliquary, considered to be a sovereign protection against epilepsy and kindred disorders. Tradition said that this bit of bone had belonged to the skull of a person, dead some two hundred years before, who had worked so many wonderful cures by his skill in medicine, and had lived such a long and saintly life, that he had been loved and venerated by all.

The Professor told us it was not uncommon, when a body was dug up in the course of excavations, to find a bit

MARKET-DAY IN PERUGIA

of the skull missing, and this amulet doubtless explained the use that had been made of such lost fragments.

Another charm was a little cross of holly-wood carved by Capuchin friars ; it had been found hanging at an old woman's bed-head, to protect her from the spells of a witch. She would only part from it on condition that she might reserve some splinters of the wood, so as to prevent the witch from visiting her, and tormenting her for having parted from her safeguard.

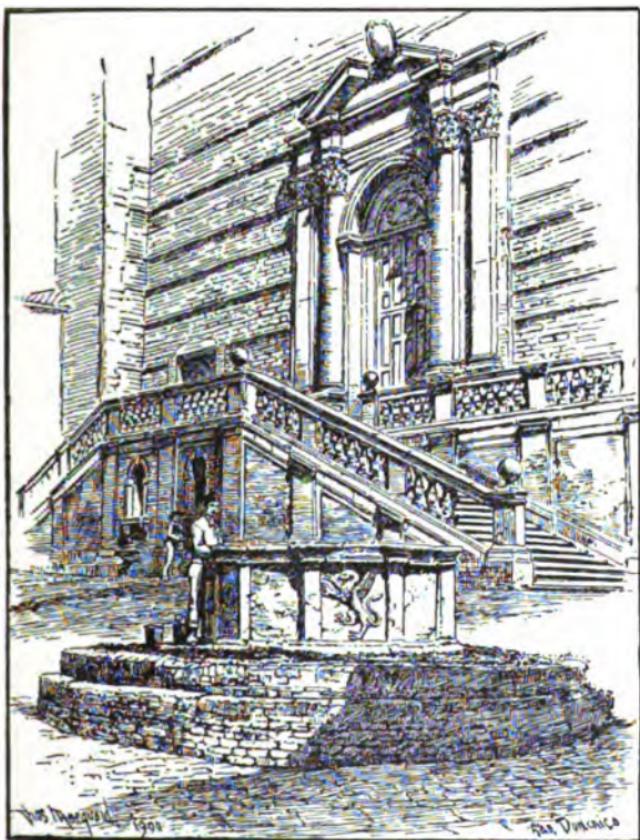
In Brittany we often saw a branch of holly hanging beside the bed for the same purpose. There were corals in this Perugian collection of various shapes, for women and children, for safety in teething, for protection against "mal occhio," to stop bleeding, and above all, for the cure of melancholy. The dark stone with red spots, which I have heard called in England bloodstone, is said to be infallible in checking bleeding ; it must be useful in a country where blood-

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

letting and leeching are still common and frequent remedies.

One of the most amusing of the charms was a heart-shaped agate with a hole through the top. This was found in a house not far from Perugia, where from time immemorial it had been held in reverence, and in which its influence was supposed to have maintained perfect harmony among the inmates of the house. Professor Bellucci did not tell us why its possessors were willing to give it up: did they want a little change from this perpetual harmony?

Belief in witches is still very prevalent in Umbria. They are said to haunt cross-roads persistently at night-time, it is also said that he who walks late in the environs of Perugia will do well to carry a few small coins in his pocket, and to fling them abroad as an offering when he comes near to a cross-road, for assuredly a witch lies there in ambush, ready to work him harm. Also, when



FOUNTAIN OUTSIDE SAN DOMENICO.

MARKET-DAY IN PERUGIA

the traveller sees in some unfrequented by-road a heap of stones beside the way, he must at once add another stone to this cairn, so that he may keep down the phantom of the murdered traveller, whose unblessed body has been hastily put underground in the lonely spot.

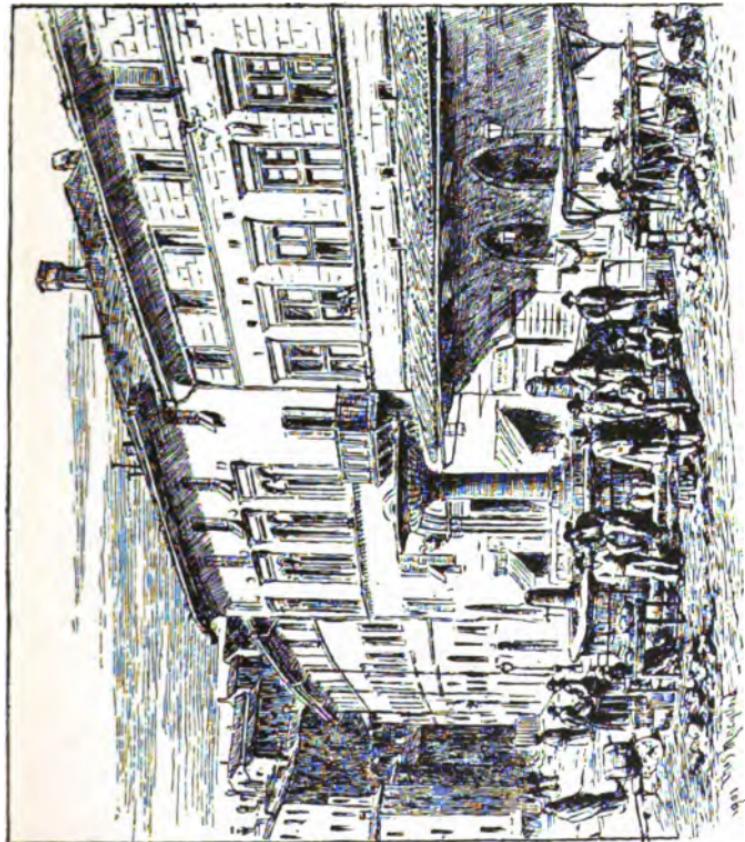
Among these ciottoli, however, I did not see any of the charming little coral hands to be found farther south, with the forefinger and little finger, the other fingers closed, pointed in defence against "mal occhio." It is possible that this belief in the virtue of coral may have originated the custom of the long coral necklace so frequently worn by the peasant women of Umbria.

San Domenico is near the Professor's house; a flight of steps leads up to the church, and before it is a fountain bearing on its side the Griffin of Perugia. The lofty campanile makes this church conspicuous from every part of the city. It must have been tall, indeed, before the tyrannical Pope ordered its

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

two upper storeys to be demolished. The original church is said to have been built early in the fourteenth century, from the designs of Giovanni Pisano ; it was, however, almost all rebuilt three centuries later. The very large and richly coloured east window, and the beautiful tomb with its remarkable canopy, were both in the first church. The tomb, that of Pope Benedict xi., who died in Perugia from eating poisoned figs, is the work of Giovanni Pisano. Some intarsia work in the choir stalls is very good, but with this exception, and the Pope's monument, San Domenico is not nearly so interesting as San Pietro de' Casinensi.

Past the little Gothic church of San Ercolano, and a line of acacias with exquisite yellow-green foliage, the tender greys of the city seemed suddenly galvanised into vivacious colour, for Piazza Sopra Mura was thronged with merry chattering crowds of market buyers and sellers ; many of the handsome peasant



PIAZZA SOPRA MURA.

MARKET-DAY IN PERUGIA

women standing or sitting behind their wares wore a necklace of coral beads.

This long Piazza is built on substructures which connect the two hills on which Perugia stands ; these substructures are said to be in some places built on the foundation of the Etruscan wall. The Piazza itself is full of infinite variety : on the right are two quaint grey mediæval palaces, with balconies and windows ; the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo or del Podestà, and the ancient university, are now used as Law Courts. One can fancy the sometimes inflammatory, sometimes soothing discourses that have been pronounced from the ringhiera of the ancient Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo. Nearly opposite this building stands a fountain. The laughing, gesticulating, ever-moving crowd in the market-place, and the brilliant hues of tomatoes, melons, and vegetables, made one's eyes ache. There was a certain sobriety in the colour of the women's gowns, for the most part

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

pale lilac or yellow cotton prints, with sometimes white jackets enlivened by the favourite necklace of coral beads.

The dark eyes, brilliant skins, and the red-gold hair of many of these women actually seemed to burn under the gay flower-like headkerchiefs, which looked at a little distance like some huge tulip-bed, so bright was the orange, chocolate, scarlet, and rose colour mingled with white and green. The laughing women mostly showed white, even teeth. The buzz of talk and laughter was so gay and animated that one wondered they could manage the buying and selling in such a hubbub.

We especially noticed an old dame, her white hair showing under a gay kerchief with a sea-green border, and a bunch of roses in the corner hanging behind her head. She too had a long string of coral, that set off the orange-brown of her skin and her clear blue eyes. Her features were regular; she had not lost her teeth, so that the form

MARKET-DAY IN PERUGIA

of her mouth was still good. She had been bargaining and gesticulating with a dark lustrous-eyed girl, with blue-black hair, for a pair of snowy struggling pigeons, and when she went back to her place behind a basket of ripe figs she moved like an old Juno.

Some of the young women were singularly handsome. Among these peasants and the people of Perugia we noticed two distinct types of face: regular features and deeply set eyes, like the faces in the old tomb of the Volumni, were frequent; some of these faces had blue eyes and beautiful red-gold hair, and were set on round pillar-like throats and well-developed figures. Others—and perhaps the greater number of the town shop-keeping class—had a far less refined type of face, turned-up noses and sensual mouths; though many of them were very attractive, especially when they wore the graceful black lace mantilla, so well suited to their brilliant complexions, dark shining eyes, and full

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red lips. Some of the men were also handsome, but not so well grown as the women were.

Probably the custom of carrying a huge basket or a tall pitcher on her head, up and down the hills and hilly streets, gives to the peasant woman in Umbria the stately grace that distinguishes her movements.

These peasants seem to take an interest in foreigners, and are much pleased to be spoken to by them. One girl who kept a handkerchief stall greatly amused us. I had been trying to bargain with her for some of her gaily-coloured wares, but she asked such a price that I turned away; she came after me, almost crying:

“If the signora will explain her ideas on the subject, we may be able to arrange,” she said.

I am bound to say that we met with much courtesy and fair dealing in Perugia. Even at the fruit-stalls, where we stood studying heaps of lemons, full of colour from bluish green to most

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golden of yellows, the owner left us in peace, and seemed pleased that we should take our fill of gazing.

But the market is soon over ; the baskets empty quickly ; the unhappy turkeys and cocks and hens, tied by the feet, are soon handed over head downwards to fresh owners ; the lemon heaps, some exquisitely green, with a leaf or so hanging from the fruit stalks, have dwindled till the remaining fruit lies flat on the large board near the fountain ; of the scarlet army of tomatoes not one is left, and all the cool, pink-fleshed slices of water melon, sown with black seeds, have disappeared.

CHAPTER III

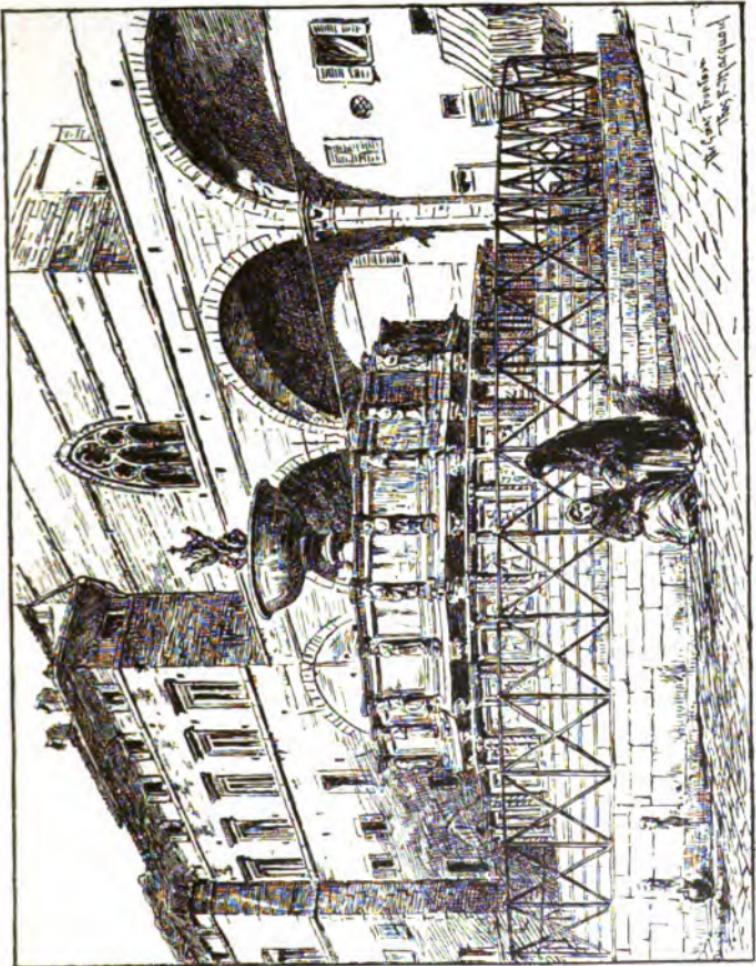
FONTE DI PERUGIA



NICOLO PISANO.

next morning we took our way up a side turning into the Corso, the handsomest street in Perugia. The shop windows had the day before been made extra gay, to attract the market-sellers; they still showed long strings of cut coral beads.

There is a mass of fine, as well as interesting, fourteenth century building on the left of the Corso: the Collegio del Cambio, and the Palazzo del Pubblico, or, as it is also called, Palazzo Comunale. This has a richly-sculptured doorway, and ends on the Piazza del Duomo; it has quaint iron lamps. On this Piazza, and facing us, we saw the un-



THE GREAT
FOUNTAIN
PIAZZA DEL DUOMO

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finished stone and brick work of the Cathedral, San Lorenzo, with its outside pulpit, from which St. Bernardino preached to the people.

On the left stands the Palace called the Canonica or Seminary, with its cloisters. This belonged to the clergy, and was the dwelling of those Popes who stayed in Perugia during their visits to the city, so greatly beloved and coveted by the Holy See.

In the centre of the Piazza stands the famous fountain usually ascribed to Nicolo Pisano, but said to have been designed by Fra Bevignate, a native of the city. However, the great Pisan sculptor and his son Giovanni made the two large marble basins, and sculptured the panels which decorate them. Nicolo, whose quaint costume is given in the initial, is said to have sculptured the twenty-four statues, now dark with age, but remarkable for the sharpness of their exquisite carving ; two of the statues are, however, restorations. The

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delicate bas-reliefs of the second basin are ascribed to Giovanni Pisano, and are full of variety ; the upper basin, with nymphs and lions and the inevitable griffin of Perugia, is supposed to have been cast in bronze by Rossi ; water no longer plays from this fountain. It is very beautiful, but it wears a sad and desolate aspect, in perfect harmony with the terrible tragedies which have been so often enacted on this square.

The finest side of the Palazzo Pubblico is that which faces the Cathedral ; it has a charming loggia and a grand double flight of steps guarded by the Guelphic lion and the Perugian griffin. There are still traces on this fine old wall showing where the keys of two cities, Siena and Assisi, were hung in chains by the arrogant Perugians, till, in one of the attacks on the city, some mercenary soldiers wrenched them away. The griffin, the quaint emblem of Perugia, is to be found repeated in all the decorative work of the city. The Palazzo

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Pubblico was built early in the fourteenth century from the design of the Benedictine, Fra Bevignate. The heads of criminals used to be fixed on the steel lances which project from it. When the criminals had been guilty of treason their heads were hung downwards. It was a custom in Perugia to confine criminals in an iron cage hung on this old wall, the miserable creatures being left to starve to death in the cage ! The horrible dungeons below can still be seen ; they give one some idea of the cruelties enacted in the Middle Ages.

The cathedral of San Lorenzo, on the Piazza del Duomo, is spacious rather than interesting, except for its associations : three Popes who died in Perugia are buried in one tomb in a transept, and in a chapel is preserved the marriage-ring of the Blessed Virgin. We noticed some good wood carving in the stalls.

On the right, beyond the cathedral and its square, is the little Piazza del

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Papa. On this a bronze statue, vivid green in colour, is raised high on a pedestal. An inscription tells that the statue represents Pope Julius III., and is the work of Vincenzo Danti.

The grand old Pope has been sitting enthroned outside the cathedral doors for more than three hundred years, with hand outstretched, in the act of blessing. It almost seems that during these long years the golden sunshine, mingled with the intense blue of the sky, has created the

brilliant colour of the bronze, this vivid green which rivals that of the lizards as they dart in and out of the grey old wall behind the Duomo.

Looking at the old Pope under different aspects,—in the sparkle of morning sun-



BRONZE STATUE OF
POPE JULIUS III.

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shine, in its full meridian glow, or in the gloom that comes to Perugia so swiftly at the heels of day,—one gets to see a different expression in the Pontiff's immovable face.

In the morning it beams on the crowd of crockery sellers, and their wares spread out on the stones around its pedestal, and points proudly to the grand group presented by the fountain and the Palazzo Comunale; at midday the expression is harder; but at even-tide a pensive cast comes over the face, more in keeping with the grass-grown street behind the statue, and the ancient grey palaces.

This bronze Pope, Julius III., was not sitting here at the time of the famous preaching of San Bernardino of Siena, on the Piazza del Duomo, when the Perugians flung their grandest vanities into a heap and burned them as a proof of penitence, as the Tuscans did at Florence in the days of Savonarola. This preaching of San Bernardino is

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commemorated in an old but restored window in the cathedral.

Behind the adjoining Piazza dei Gigli, an open square in front of the Sorbello Palazzo, is a way going steeply upwards to the right ; it has bricked steps in the middle, but at the side of these is a long strip of ascending slope, so irregularly paved that it might serve as a specimen pattern of the variously paved streets in the town. Tufts of grass between the stones show that this way is not much used. Its right side is walled by the church of Santa Maria Nuova, and high above it on the left are some quaint houses. This road leads to San Severo, a little chapel containing what is called Raffaelle's first fresco, unhappily very much restored. The view of the country between the houses near it is more interesting than the painting.

This is a very old part of the town ; presently, through a tunnel under a low-browed arch, we came out on the Piazza of Monte Sole, surrounded by old

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palaces. This Piazza marks the summit of one of the two hills on which ancient Perugia was built by the Etruscans; the other hill, Colle Landone, is crowned by Palazzo Donnini, and till the time of wise and valiant Forte Braccio, who, though cruel, seems to have been the best ruler the Perugians can boast of, the valley between these two hills existed.

Forte Braccio caused it to be filled up, and the Piazza Sopra Mura, where the weekly market is held, takes its name from the levelling and sub-structures then effected.

It was from Piazza Monte Sole that the despotic Abbot Monmaggiore fled along the covered way he had made to connect his citadel of Monte Sole with his palaces at Porta San Antonio. On this occasion the nobles joined hands with the citizens against the conspiring French priest, drove the foreigners out of the city, and for the time freed Perugia from the hated Papal yoke.

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Going on from the Piazza Monte Sole, a few steps bring us to a tree-shaded terrace with benches placed along it. There is a grand view from the wall that bounds the terrace, and seems to go straight down into the valley. Just below is the red cupola-topped church of Santa Maria Nuova, while the houses of the town lay thickly clustered below. The ancient wall from which we now gaze runs out northward on the right, and on the left goes on till it reaches the famous Etruscan arch near the Piazza Grimani. Beyond are the heights, on one of which stands the convent of San Francesco, outside the extreme northern point marked by the gate of San Angelo ; from this we get a glimpse of Subasio. Going out behind the terrace we see the Duomo close by, and soon find our way back to the Corso.

Perugia was never weak ; rather she was in all things powerful, and she produced a race of the most renowned

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Condottieri of Italy, the bloodthirsty Baglioni. Had the brutal nobles and the proud citizens been able to control their passions, and to discipline their ambition ; had they been able to behave, in fact, like Christians, Perugia might have held sovereign sway in Umbria.

Instead of this, though nominally governed by the Podestà, or chief magistrate and the Priori, she was frequently forced to defend herself against Papal plots and aggression ; almost constantly against the tyranny of her rival nobles, and the mischiefs caused by their brawls between themselves, and with the Raspanti, among whom were the richest and most powerful of the citizens.

Through these centuries, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth, the Piazza del Duomo often ran with blood. It was the chief scene of the fierce struggles which make the eventful history of the hill-city ; for until the time of Paul the Third, Perugia never entirely submitted to the personal sway of an alien ruler,

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though she frequently banished both nobles and Raspanti.

There was a short period of comparative peace when, in the fourteenth century, the Condottiere Biordo Michelotti entered the city at the head of the banished Raspanti, and became supreme ruler in the name of the people. Broils were still frequent between the nobles and the plebs, but Biordo was the first of the brigand despots who tried to free Perugia from Papal encroachments.

Warlike, wicked Guidalotti, Abbot of San Pietro, jealously watched the Captain's success, and justly estimated his power; he resolved to end it, and to restore the influence of the Holy See in Perugia.

Biordo, a valiant, hard-working ruler, had asked in marriage the beautiful Lucrezia Orsini, with whom he hoped, now that the city enjoyed comparative quiet, to end his days in peace. The Abbot thought that these bridal festiv-

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ties would give him the opportunity he sought.

A few days after the marriage the wily priest rode up from San Pietro on horseback to the higher part of the town. He here collected his bravi together, and rode on to Michelotti's palace on Monte Sole. As soon as Michelotti came down to greet his visitor the Abbot put his arm round him and kissed him. At this signal the other ruffians at once attacked the unarmed governor, and killed him with their poisoned daggers.

After Biordo Michelotti, came early in the next century the valiant and wise Forte Braccio, who greatly improved the condition of the city, and repressed licence and disorder. But this brave (though cruel) soldier and sagacious ruler was defeated in battle, and died from the wounds he received. This was a terrible loss; it alarmed the Perugians, for though Forte Braccio was of noble birth, being Conte di Montone, he had

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protected the city against the outrages of the fierce and brutal Oddi, Baglioni, Corgna, and others. The citizens, in their despair at the loss of their ruler, made overtures to Pope Martin, who received them with open arms.

At this the nobles felt all their power restored ; they knew the Pope would side with them against the people, and, quitting their houses in the country around the city, they established themselves in palaces chiefly in the vicinity of Porta Marzia, whence it was easy to overawe the town.

After Forte Braccio's death, one of his soldiers, a singularly brave and capable man, named Nicola Piccinino, tried to wrest supreme power both from the Pope and the nobles. The Perugians suffered terribly, for, while the long struggle lasted, the Pope, the nobles, and Piccinino, who was liked by the people and idolised by the army, all levied taxes on them ; Nicola at last ceased his efforts to attain supreme

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power, and accepted from the Pope the post of Gonfalonere, chief magistrate of the city, in the pontiff's name.

The nobles at this period were left unhindered to brawl as they pleased. The Baglioni, a race of men so renowned for crime, strength, bravery, and beauty, that they recall the heroes of the *Iliad*, and one wonders whether the old pagans were not better men than those so-called Christians, were always at war with the Oddi, till at last they worsted their rivals, and drove them out of Perugia ; then they fell out among themselves. During their last struggle with the Oddi they took possession of the cathedral and fortified it.

After the banishment of the Oddi the power of the Baglioni greatly increased ; it became almost supreme. The Pope had given them the lordship of Spello ; they also owned Spoleto, and some others of the hill-cities of Umbria. These possessions brought them great wealth. They were cruel and tyrannical

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despots ; they appointed civic officials ; it was even said that no legate ventured to visit the city unless he was a friend of the Baglioni.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century some of the poorer and more obscure members of this powerful clan, or, as the old chronicler Matarazzo terms them, "beautiful Baglioni," murmured loudly against their richer kinsfolk. They were just as indolent, just as brutal and licentious, and in proportion to their means fully as arrogant and prodigal. But people were not afraid of them ; they had neither wealth to keep bravi with, nor influence to support and further their pretensions. These poor relations could no longer endure their dependent position ; they saw that if the sons of the elder house were disposed of, they should have a chance of coming to their own. At present they were completely shadowed by the wealth and haughty self-assertion of their cousins ; they also coveted their posses-

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sions, and longed to divide them among themselves.

The heads of the Baglione house were the two brothers, Guido and Ridolfo. Guido had five stalwart sons, as much noted for their prowess and heroic bravery, as for their good looks; these were Astorre, Adriano (usually called Morgante, because of his wonderful strength), Marcantonio, Gismondo, and Gentile. Ridolfo's sons were Troilo, Gianpaolo, and Simonetto.

Besides the splendid sons of Guido and Ridolfo, there was yet another very wealthy and distinguished scion of the Baglione family, their young cousin Grifonetto. He was happily married to a young and beautiful wife, and was on friendly terms with all his cousins. His father, Grifone, had died young in battle; his still young and lovely mother, Atalanta Baglione, was extremely rich. She so greatly loved Grifonetto, her only child, that she remained a widow for his sake, and gave up her own home to live with

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him and his fair young wife, Zenobia Sforza, in the splendid palace he had built near Porta Marzia.

A few years before the end of the fifteenth century, the banished Oddi faction thought fit to attack the city ; they rode suddenly in through the gates, and began to strike at the chains stretched across the street for defence against sudden attacks. The first to give the alarm was Simonetto Baglione, a young and beardless youth, who, though of a fierce and cruel nature, was heroically brave. He rushed forth in his shirt, armed only with sword and shield, and held the squadron of advancing Oddi at bay before the barrier that defended the Piazza. Soon ten of his adversaries lay dead at his feet. Till he had killed many more he persevered in attacking the foe with intense fury; until he had received twenty-two wounds. Then his cousin Astorre rode forth to help him. "Go and tend your wounds, Simonetto," he cried, and dashed at the common

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enemy ; a falcon flashed on his gilded helmet, with the griffin's tail sweeping behind it. At once he became a target for the Oddi, their blows fell so thick and fast that each hindered the other from striking truly ; nothing could be heard above the din of the strokes made by lances, partizans, crossbow quarries, and other weapons falling on Astorre's body ; the sound of those great blows overbore the noise and shouting of the combatants. But the noble Astorre was undismayed by the horrid clamour, he rode his horse into the thickest of the fight, and trampled the Oddi under foot ; while his horse, being a most fierce animal, gave the enemy what trouble it could, for so soon as they were jostled and overthrown by his rider, the beast trampled on them. By the time that the other Baglioni heroes sallied forth to help him, Astorre and his war-horse were overdone, they could scarce breathe.

The Oddi were again driven from the

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city, but a war followed which devastated the fertile country between Perugia and Assisi.

All through these fearful times of strife and bloodshed Art was progressing quietly and surely in Perugia. Raffaelle was at this time working in the atelier of Perugino, and it is thought that he must have witnessed this splendid defence of Astorre Baglione, and that he afterwards reproduced the young warrior, his helmet crowned by a falcon and tail of griffin, in the St. George of the Louvre, and the trampling horseman in the Heliodorus Stanza of the Vatican.

After this achievement the Baglioni seem to have had a short time of family peace. This was soon interrupted. Grifonetto's wealth, the splendid palace in which he lived with his lovely mother and Zenobia Sforza, his beautiful wife, helped to make him, young though he was, the most powerful member of the family. He and his wife dearly loved

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each other, and the chronicler says, "No wonder, for they were as beautiful as angels." But for evil counsellors, and the restless ambition of the Baglioni, this state of affairs might have lasted. Three of the evil and disappointed relatives clung to Grifonetto like limpets ; these were his uncle Filippo, his cousin Carlo Baciglia Baglione, and a scandalously dissolute scoundrel named Jeronimo della Penna or Arciprete. They took counsel together as to how the sons of Guido and Ridolfo Baglione could be easiest put out of the way, so that their wealth and power might be divided among the conspirators. Too poor and of too ill-repute to act alone, they saw that their patron Grifonetto had all they lacked, and they resolved to persuade him to head their conspiracy. At first they strove to win him by the offer of supreme power in Perugia ; he could revolt, they said, against the Papal yoke, and become sovereign ruler in the city. Grifonetto

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was not ambitious ; he had all he wanted,—their proposals did not tempt him.

Astorre was about to wed a Roman bride, Lavinia, the daughter of a Colonna father and an Orsini mother, and the malcontent Baglioni decided that this marriage, which was to happen at the end of July, would be a great opportunity for ridding themselves of their hated kindred, as it would assemble every member of the family in Perugia, except Marcantonio, who, being out of health, was taking baths at Naples.

The conspirators took fresh counsel together ; the time fixed for the marriage was now close at hand, they must at once win over Grifonetto to their schemes. They therefore told him that Zenobia, the beautiful wife he so adored, was unfaithful to him, with his cousin Giampaolo, one of the sons of Ridolfo Baglione.

Grifonetto was furious ; in his mad jealousy he believed this story, and thirsted for vengeance : he consented

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to head the conspiracy, and to rid the city of the elder branch of his family by a wholesale murder.

Among the conspirators were Jeronimo della Staffa, three members of the Corgna family and others ; only two of those who engaged in this bloodthirsty scheme were over thirty years old.

The Baglioni were chiefly lodged in houses on or near the Porta Marzia ; Astorre and his bride, on the night of the murder, were lodged in the beautiful palace of Grifonetto, which was the wonder of Perugia, and always pointed out to strangers as a marvel of magnificence both inside and out. Among his other treasures, Grifonetto possessed a lion ; Astorre and Gianpaolo, the sons of Guido and Ridolfo Baglione, each owned one of the royal beasts, and their fearful roaring at night struck terror to the hearts of belated Perugians on their way home.

It had been arranged that as soon as the proposed victims were asleep

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the signal should be given ; this was to be a stone thrown from the loggia of the Magnifico Guido's palace, into the court below.

Banquets, jousts, all kinds of magnificent festivities had gone on for days past. That night a great supper was given, at which the conspirators were present ; they appeared to be on the most friendly terms with the others, and were even affectionate and caressing to all,—yet the traitors had decided who was to be the murderer of each victim, and the number of bravi by which each murderer should be accompanied in case of resistance.

At last the time arrived. The victims, heavy with wine, had retired to rest, they slept undisturbed by the roaring of the lions. Then the signal was given ; each assassin stood ready at the appointed door. Carlo Baglione, who seems to have been the mainspring of “*el gran tradimento*,” as the chronicler Matarazzo calls it, made first for the

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sleeping-chamber of the head of the family, the "Magnifico Guido," but he turned aside to that of young Simonetto. Jeronimo della Penna forced open the door of the noble Gismondo; while Grifonetto himself attacked Gianpaolo, Filippo de Braccio and one of the Corgna family unlocked the door of valiant Astorre, who, asleep with his newly-married wife, was thus murderously awakened; the young fellow opened the door, and, seeing his murderers, he guessed the truth. As they attacked him he cried out, "Wretched Astorre, who dies like a coward." His young wife rushed up to him, and flung her arms round him, trying to make her body a shield between him and his assailants, but they had already stabbed him with many more blows than would have sufficed to kill him, and she too received a wound. Then the brutal Filippo di Braccio, seeing how large a wound was in Astorre's breast, thrust in his hand, tore out his heart, and

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savagely bit it. After this he and his accomplice flung the body of Astorre down the stairs and into the street, where presently the murdered Simonetto lay beside it. He had wakened, and, seeing the murderers kill the companion who lay in his chamber, armed himself, and fought his way through the villainous crowd of bravi, till he reached the foot of the stairs ; here fresh assailants despatched him. Simonetto's uncle Guido had also time to snatch up his sword ; but, powerful though he was, he was killed.

Grifonetto was less successful than his fellow-conspirators. Gianpaolo, the most daring of the elder branch of the Baglioni, had taken alarm, and so had his squire. But Gianpaolo was sagacious as well as brave, and, not knowing who were his assailants, he bade his squire guard the staircase which led from his chamber to the roof, while he tried to escape over the tops of the other palaces.

The squire fought valiantly, and held his post for some time,—the staircase

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turned, and gave him a point of vantage over his assailants from below. Gianpaolo reached the roof, and crawled over it till, coming to the skylight of his cousin Grifonetto's palace, he had a mind, in his ignorance as to the conspirators, to seek shelter there; but he gave up the idea, and climbed through a window into another house, owned by one of the citizens; the good man within was so terrified at the sight of Baglione, that, in his fear, he refused to harbour the great noble. Gianpaolo, going back to the roof, found his way into the atelier of some foreign artists, who were also greatly alarmed at his appearance among them. One of them, however, named Achille de la Mandola, seems to have greatly helped the fugitive.

Gianpaolo finally made his way out into the street; and soon after out of the city. Seeing a mule grazing by the way-side, he at once mounted it, though he was greatly disturbed to quit Perugia without having either discovered the

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meaning of this night attack, or taken vengeance on the unknown assassins. In the meantime day had broken, and Gentile Baglione, who lived some way from his father's house, had been also attacked by the conspirators ; he escaped them at once, by mounting his horse and riding away. Just as he reached the bridge beyond the plain, he was amazed to recognise his elder cousin Gianpaolo, riding in the same direction on a mule.

When Atalanta, Grifonetto's beautiful young mother, heard of the tragedy that had been acted so close to her, she rose up, wrapped herself in a large cloak, and, taking with her the two little sons of Gianpaolo and her daughter-in-law, Zenobia Sforza, she quitted her son's house (she loved Grifonetto so dearly that she had always lived with him, having been widowed before she was twenty) and took refuge in her own dwelling on the Colle Landone. She had nothing with her but the cloak she

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wore, and when she learned in detail the events of the night she solemnly vowed she would never again cross her son's threshold. Grifonetto had quickly repented his crime. His eyes had opened to the wickedness into which his mad jealousy had betrayed him. As soon as he learned his mother's departure he followed her, but he was refused admittance ; he, however, forced his way into her presence. She stayed his approach with outstretched hands, and delivered her solemn curse on his guilty head as the murderer of his nearest kindred. The young fellow fled horror-stricken from her presence, but soon returned ; he could not find peace, he said, till his beloved, beautiful mother forgave him, and removed the curse she had laid on him.

Atalanta had, however, taken her precautions, and though the unhappy Grifonetto went again and again from his Palazzo to that on the Colle Landone, Atalanta refused to see or listen to him.

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With the exception of his complicity in this fearful tragedy, Grifonetto seems to have had more human feeling than some of his cousins of the elder branch. His suffering under his mother's curse, and his penitence for his crime, had completely unnerved him. When Gianpaolo, who by the death of his uncle Guido was now the head of the Baglioni, returned to Perugia with the troops he and his brothers had rallied round them, they were met at the city gate by an excited crowd of citizens; for though some of the Perugians still sided with their favourite Grifonetto, the larger portion abhorred his foul treason, and longed to see it avenged. Gianpaolo, seeing the concourse and hearing the cries of welcome, asked graciously that the ladies present in the crowd would be good enough to pray for his success. They did so, and sent out, besides, wine to refresh him and his soldiers after their journey, before they began to revenge them-

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selves on their enemies. Grifonetto had come towards the gate with intent to guard it, gnashing his teeth and weeping, for he had made another attempt to see his mother. He presently met Gianpaolo on the Piazza, where some of the conspirators had already been slain,—Carlo Baglione and Jeronimo della Penna had a narrow escape by climbing the city wall.

Gianpaolo gazed with pitying contempt at his young cousin, who, still overwhelmed with remorse for his share in the unnatural crime, and heart-broken by his mother's curse, was taken aback at thus suddenly meeting his enemy within the city.

Gianpaolo rode up, and, pointing his sword at Grifonetto's throat, cried out ; “ Farewell, thou traitor Grifonetto ; thou art”— Then he added, “ Go, in God's name, for I will not kill you ; I will not dip my hands in your blood, as you have dipped yours in the blood of your kindred.”

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He turned away, making a sign to his guards, they fell on the stricken Grifonetto, and wounded him so that his “graceful limbs” could no longer support him ; he fell in a pool of blood on the ground. The terrible news was at once carried to his mother Atalanta, and his sorrowful wife Zenobia ; they hurried down to the Piazza, and found their dearly loved Grifonetto not yet dead, but bleeding from every wound. His mother fell on her knees beside him ; she assured him of her forgiveness, and gave him her blessing in place of the curse she had laid on him. She implored him to pardon his murderers, and to give her a sign that he did so. At this the dying youth clasped the white hand of his young mother, whom he so dearly loved, and, pressing it, he expired. “No words,” adds the chronicler, “can paint the grief of the wife who had so dearly loved him, or of the mother who had remained a widow because of her great love for this adored son. At last they

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rose, stained with the blood that streamed from him, and ordered his body to be carried to the hospital."

By this time Gianpaolo and his troops had returned to the Piazza, bent on taking a complete revenge on the conspirators and all enemies of the Baglione family in Perugia. A fierce battle was fought on the Piazza, and in the cathedral itself, for Gianpaolo had caused a large fire to be kindled before the door, so as to gain access to the interior ; even those who took refuge at the high altar were slain there. More than a hundred persons were murdered by Gianpaolo's order ; the dead bodies lay where they fell, till the cathedral was bloodstained from one end to the other.

Then the Magnifico Gianpaolo, being now the head of the family, took possession of Grifonetto's palace and of all the Baglione dwellings which, as has been said, were near the Porta Marzia. He gave command that all should be solemnly hung with black, as a token

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of mourning for the victims of “el gran tradimento,”—a term which Matarazzo constantly repeats. Gianpaolo also gave command that the cathedral of San Lorenzo should be washed with wine from one end to the other, and then re-consecrated, to purge it from the blood shed there during his vengeance on the slayers of his kindred, and on all who were in any way unfriendly to the house of Baglione.

Even Matarazzo, the enthusiastic admirer of Gian,—or, as he frequently calls him, Giovanpaolo,—bursts into lamentation over the continued excesses committed in Perugia till the death of his hero. The chronicler tells us that from the time the Oddi were banished there was no rule in the city, except that of might against right ; every man who was powerful enough took the law in his own hands : rapine, murder, plunder, reigned unchecked. When the Popes, aware of the persistent excesses, sent now and again a legate to control and modify

FONTE DI PERUGIA

disorder, and to restore some amount of security to the dismayed and outraged citizens, the envoys rarely remained long enough to interfere, even if they ventured within the gates of Perugia, lest they should give offence to the Baglioni, and be either stabbed or at best flung out of window.

At last Gianpaolo submitted himself to the power of the Pope, and though the Perugians detested Papal government, they had suffered so severely under the Baglioni tyranny that they hailed the prospect of change, especially as the terms granted them promised moderation.

Leo the Tenth, however, had little faith in Gianpaolo Baglione ; he therefore lured him to Rome by sending him a safe-conduct. On his arrival the Pope caused him to be imprisoned in the castle of San Angelo ; where he was soon after beheaded.

Gianpaolo's descendants went from bad to worse. They were powerful in

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

other states besides Perugia ; captains of Condottieri in Venice, in Florence, also in the States of the Church. One of them, Malatesta Baglione, proved himself a most infamous traitor ; he sold himself to Pope Clement VII., and, for his dastardly treason to Florence, was held up to public execration. The last male member of this terrible family died in the middle of the sixteenth century.

With the accession to the popedom of Paul the Third came the deathblow to the freedom of Perugia. He broke all the treaties as to municipal rights and privileges, etc., granted by his predecessors, and built a huge citadel to overawe the town, actually removing one of the Etruscan gates, the Porta Marzia (now restored to its original site), to make room for his tyrannical construction. The military despotism of Pope Paul must have been heart-breaking to a free, proud people like the Perugians.

FONTE DI PERUGIA

There seems to have been less blood-shed under the Papal tyranny, but this little incident at its beginning, taken from an old record in the Public Library, was a savage sort of portent :

“ While the Duke Pietro Aloigi stayed with his troops in Perugia, to order the new government, Agostino de’ Pistoia and Antonio Romano, two of his soldiers, asked the Duke’s permission to fight out their quarrel in his presence on the Piazza of Perugia. The Duke gave consent, and ordered that they should fight before the chapel of the Cambio. There, surrounded by the populace, the Duke being at one of the windows of the palace, they fought in their shirts with swords and daggers.

“ Both men showed much courage and daring, but at last Agostino, of Pistoia, who was both handsome and tall of stature, fell on the ground dead.

“ Victory was at once cried for Antonio Romano, who, by his father’s side, was of Perugia ; but from the many and

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

grievous wounds the Pistonian had given him, Antonio was considered by many as good as dead, and was carried home by his friends. However, by the great care taken of him, he after a while recovered his strength."

CHAPTER IV

THE COLLEGIO DEL CAMBIO AND THE PINACOTECA

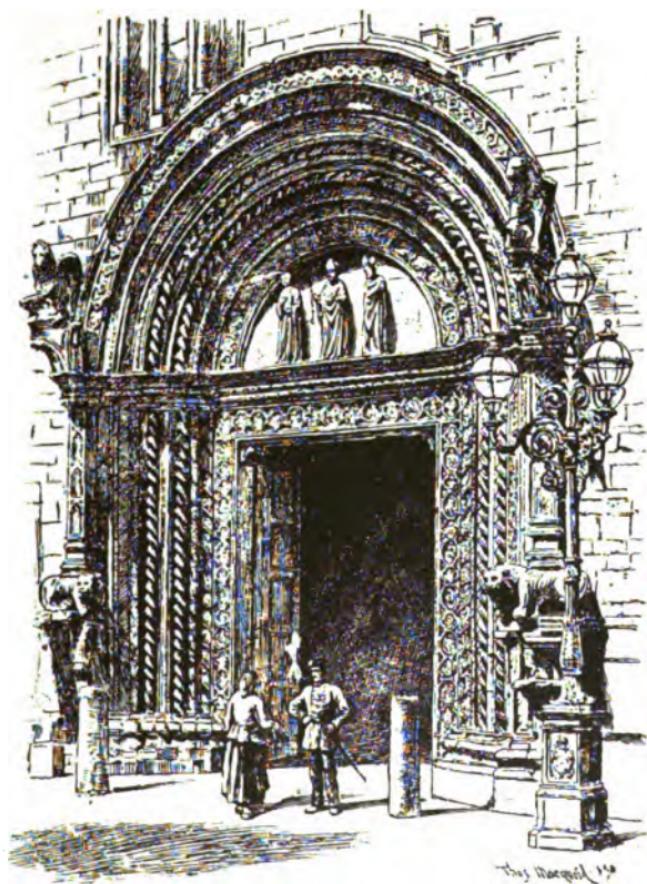


PERUGINO.

CORSO was on the left near the Fonte grand range of ancient buildings, in which is the entrance to the chapel of the Cambio; beside this is the Sala, adorned with Perugino's famous frescoes. A little farther on is the richly-sculptured doorway of the Palazzo Pubblico, and within this is the Pinacoteca, containing a very interesting collection of art treasures. Here are marvellous frescoes by Bonfigli; and pictures by him and by Piero della Francesca, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, and other famous old painters.

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

It would be difficult to say too much in praise of the Sala del Cambio : the harmony preserved throughout it, in the rich and artistic decoration of its walls and ceiling, is most soothing, and adds greatly to the enjoyment one feels in the beautiful little place. The lower part of the walls is wainscotted with dark wood, inlaid with tarsiatura by Domenico del Tasso ; the doors have the date 1483. Near the entrance is the raised throne for the judge ; below this are desks and seats for the money-changers, and these are exquisitely carved. One account says that the intarsia designs were furnished by Raffaelle ; another tells us that Domenico del Tasso was both designer and executor of this beautiful work. In the record of the agreement between the authorities at Perugia and Pietro Vannucci the painter, he writes, " My intention in the frescoes which cover the upper part of the walls is to recommend the merchants and magistrates therein assembled never to forsake



DOORWAY OF PALAZZO PUBBLICO

THE COLLEGIO DEL CAMBIO

the path of duty, but to remain faithful to the dictates of wisdom, of natural reason, and of religion."

Faith and Love are emphasised by two large frescoes facing the entrance, the Transfiguration and the Adoration of the Magi ; Hope of an eternal future, by the prophets and sibyls on the wall to the right.

On the left wall the frescoes depict moral qualities,—Justice and Prudence, illustrated below by the figures of Fabius Maximus, Socrates, Numa, Camillus, Pittacus, and Trajan.

On a lower level still is a portrait in oil of Perugino, painted by himself ; while the remaining half of the upper wall has figures representing Courage and Temperance. Below them are Licinius Leonidas and Horatius Cocles ; Scipio Africanus, Pericles, and Cincinnatus.

There is not any attempt at grouping in these frescoes : the figures stand severe and stately, as if they were on the look-out to rebuke any cheating

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

or covetous practices going on in the Hall below. It is remarkable that the painter should have been accused of greed in the pursuit of his calling, when he considered it necessary to call up on the walls of the Sala so many witnesses to protest against the love of money in others. The ceiling is divided into bays, on which are the planets. In the centre is the sun, represented by Apollo in his chariot ; the spaces between are filled with ornament and figures, some of which are attributed to Raffaelle.

On a bright morning, when the sun is pouring light and warmth into the little Sala, the rich tone of these frescoes is marvellous, and, so far as one can see, they have not greatly suffered by restoration.

In the adjoining Cappella del Cambio are some sibyls and children, said to be Raffaelle's, but the work in these has evidently been much retouched.

Perugino is at his best in the frescoes

THE COLLEGIO DEL CAMBIO

the Sala ; they form a striking contrast to the monotony of style which, in spite of their individual beauty, wearies one in his Perugian oil pictures. The artist devoted to his work upstairs in the Pinacoteca is, on the whole, disappointing.

The pictures are calm and sweet and quieted, but one longs for variety of expression ; a few, however, show marked superiority over the rest. It is very curious to remember that these peaceful saintly pictures were painted when daily brawls were taking place in the city, even while her chief Piazza streamed with the blood of nobles and Raspanti.

The most interesting Umbrian pictures are those, only a few, by a rare and early painter, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, who with Piero della Francesca, from Borgo del Sepolcro, and Benedetto Bonfigli, had established a school of art in Perugia. The lovely head of a Madonna by this rarely found painter, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, is over a doorway in the Palazzo Publico.

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

blico, and upstairs in one of the galleries are two very remarkable pictures, the Adoration of the Magi is especially beautiful.

The three kings stand on the left,—one of them is said to be a portrait, when young, of Perugino ; on the ground, in the centre, lies the Holy Child ; the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph kneel on either side of Him. Opposite the magi are the ox, and a very wise-looking ass ; while a large group of angels fills up the background, and forms the most interesting part of the picture ; the angels are so altogether original and graceful.

The painting of detail is marvellously finished, though the similarity of faces and of costume make it probable that the same model was used for most of the angels. They and smaller figures, the shepherds and others, seen at the openings which reveal landscape on either side of the stable, are singularly full of grace and charm. There is

THE COLLEGIO DEL CAMBIO

admirable colour in all the pictures by this painter.

We find paintings by Niccolo Alunno of Foligno, another contemporary, pictures too by some old Sienese masters ; a room is filled with small easel pictures by Fra Angelico. The student of early Italian art will find in these galleries abundant material of a most interesting kind. The pictures were formerly scattered in the various churches of Perugia, for which they had been painted ; the government has now collected and placed them in the Pinacoteca.

One of the rooms leads on to a terrace. Here is a beautiful view over the surrounding country. The old cicerone took much interest in showing us where Siena and Orvieto and Rome lay, all three hidden among ranges of blue hills.

CHAPTER V

SPELLO

THE pleasantest and shortest road to the railway is by Porta Eburnea. I started one day from this gate with a friend, by a steep path which leaves the road just outside the Porta, and curves along the side of the hill below the old wall. The bank, this fine morning, was gay with butterflies and wild flowers, and wreathed with a luxuriant growth of wild gourd, full of pale blossoms and small furry fruit; all was so wild, it seemed impossible we had only just left a busy city behind us.

At the turn of the path we came into a delightful lane, between bramble-covered banks; on one side was the dry bed of a little rill, and overhead branches

SPELLO

of quaint trees met each other. From the Italian custom of constantly stripping the leaves to provide fodder, the foliage was scanty, yet we went down the steep path in cool and checkered shadow ; lizards, darting across the way before us, gleamed as they passed in and out of the light.

This practice of stripping leaves from the trees for fodder, gives a quaint appearance to many of them ; in this lane the gnarled and twisted branches looked grotesque. A man high up in one of the trees sang as gaily as a bird, while he filled with leaves a sack fastened to one of the branches.

Now and again the rich transparent purple of the shadows was traversed by a bar of golden light ; this sometimes came in irregular flecks from spaces between the twisted trunks and crossing branches.

A woman coming up from the station, with a heavy basket on her head, said, “ *Buon Giorno,*” and smiled pleasantly

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

as she passed; then a countryman, a fine, handsome fellow with glowing black eyes, wished us a good journey. He was going at such a pace that he must have been bound for the station; usually the easy, leisureful movements of its people seem to me one of the charms of Italy, so entirely in harmony with the burning, palpitating blue of its skies and the careless luxuriance of its vegetation.



THE WAY TO THE
STATION, PERUGIA.

Near the end of the descent is a washing place, and here a woman on her knees was hard at work, scrubbing and soap-ing linen. Looking back up the lane we saw the grey town peeping at us through the trees,—the tower of a house on the Piazza a prominent feature in the view.

At the foot of the lane we crossed the dusty highroad, and again followed the short way, here very steep and



FONTANA BORGHESE
outsiae PERUGIA

SPELLO

rugged. At the end we came out at a cross-road where the Fontana Borghese, at one angle, made a striking feature ; partly shadowed by tall cypresses, it glowed red in the sunshine. The date is 1615 ; its basin is green with age, and from the constant drip, drip of the water. To-day the fountain was surrounded with wine carts, each drawn by a pair of huge white oxen. It is fortunate these beautiful creatures are so gentle, for their wide-spreading, sharply pointed horns make them formidable ; indeed, when the wine season began, during our stay in Perugia, we had sometimes to take refuge in a shop while they passed, for the horns of a pair of these splendid beasts stretched from one side of a narrow street to the other. Inside a little wine-shop opposite the Fontana Borghese we heard shouts of "Dieci," "otto," "sette," etc., from the players at morra.

One of the charms of Perugia is the genial courtesy of the people. My com-

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

panion on this excursion had stayed several times in the town, and to-day when she appeared at the station all the officials were at her service, full of little friendly attentions, especially one giant-like porter called "Lungo."

The railway takes its course to Foligno through the valley of the Tiber, with mountain views on each side. Perugia stands grandly on the top of her hills, while on one side rises like an advanced guard the spire of San Pietro, and on a spur to the west Santa Giuliana ; but the city is not so picturesque from this point, because one sees the modern buildings on the great Piazza Vittor Emanuele. On the left we saw the outside of the famous Etruscan tomb of the Volumnii, and soon after passed the pretty village of Ponte San Giovanni, getting a glimpse of the Tiber.

From the railway one has a good view of Assisi, clinging to the side of Monte Subasio, and the station is close to the church of Santa Maria degli

SPELLÒ

Angeli ; but we were bound for Foligno, and did not stop here to-day. As the railway circles round it we noted the splendid mass made by Subasio in this chain of mountains.

We passed by Spello, perched on a spur of the great hill, but it was disappointing to find that, after this, the valley broadened out into a plain, so that Foligno stands tamely on level ground. It does not seem to be much visited, though it is a quaint little town, and has, we heard, a tolerable inn.

On our arrival we were attacked by vociferous drivers and guides, so we took one of the dirty little carriages and drove up an avenue past the huge statue of Niccolo Alunno, a native of Foligno, to the Piazza. We were hardly out of our vehicle when up rushed a wretched-looking man, his bare chest showing red and hairy through the opening of his dirty shirt, while a huge piece of green oilskin covered his shoulders. "Ecco, Ecco, it is not possible the

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

Signorine can find their way," he shouted. "I only can show them Foligno."

As he continued to persecute us, and our time was short, we submitted, and followed his guidance.

The outside of the cathedral fronting the Piazza is curious. Two monsters, lions in red granite, guard the portal; one of these creatures has an eagle in its mouth. Above the doorway is a curious sort of arcade; the door-heading itself has been recently restored with the emblems of the evangelists. There is nothing to see inside this church. Opposite it is a quaint old building, and on the right is the Tribunale del Commune.

We had to wait some time here while the keys were fetched; we then followed the custode up an old stone staircase to an ante-chapel to see the frescoes of Ottaviano Nelli. We went on into the little chapel; here the frescoes have been restored. They represent the life

SPELLO

of the Blessed Virgin, from her birth to her Assumption, and are full of interest.

Coming out, we followed our ragged, repulsive-looking guide down a street close by, and saw the Palazzo Deli, a handsome building, designed, it is said, by Baccio d'Agnolo. There are three other churches ; in one of them, San Niccolo, is a Nativity by Alunno ; the figure of San Joseph is very fine. One of the statues in front of the choir, a female saint, has her feet bound with brass ; the sacristan told us that this had been done to preserve them from the devotion of worshippers who had already kissed away the ends of the saint's toes. The frescoes in Santa Maria infra Portas, a very old church, are mostly ancient, but completely faded. Raphael's beautiful Madonna di Foligno, now in the Vatican, was once in the church of Santa Anna in this town.

We greatly regretted that we could not drive on to Montefalco, a pictur-

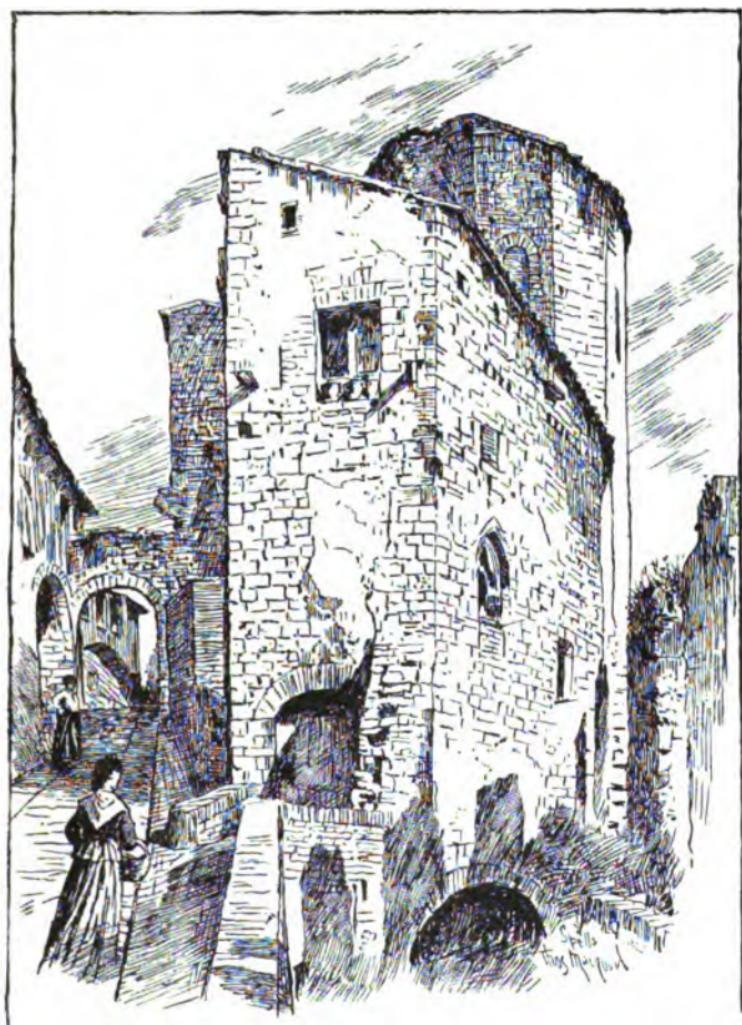
PICTURES IN UMBRIA

esquely placed little town, with many good pictures by Umbrian painters; there are several also said to be by Benozzo Gozzoli.

We took another little carriage, standing in a side street, and had a very pleasant drive back to Spello, between vineyards and olive groves, eating our luncheon on the way. Spello looked very attractive as we approached it, its white houses gleaming in the sunlight against the green hill on the side of which it stands.

We entered the town under a quaint and ancient gateway, the Porta Veneris of Hispellum, for Spello is an old Roman town, and the ancient walls and some of the gates have been preserved. This gate has three figures outside it, a picturesque fountain stands near, and to-day beside it sat a group of handsome peasants, eating and drinking in the sunshine.

We thought the steep old street was full of pictures for a sketcher as we



POR TA VENERIS, SPELLO.

SPELLO

drove up to the Piazza, on which is the Cathedral Santa Maria Maggiore. Entering, we were at once struck with the remarkable early fifteenth-century canopy, the work of an Umbrian sculptor, Rocca di Vicenza; it is made of the stone of the country called Cacciolfo, and has a polished surface. The four pillars are in pairs; in front of two of them the artist has introduced portraits of himself and his wife; beyond, right and left, are Madonnas by Perugino. The sacristan told us that there is a still finer specimen of the sculptor Rocca di Vicenza's work at Trevi. On the opposite side of the church is the Capella del Sacramento, the work of Pinturicchio; three of the walls and the ceiling here are covered with beautiful frescoes in delightful harmony of colour. On one side is the Annunciation, with the name and portrait of the painter, on the other walls are the Adoration and the Disputa; this last is a very interesting picture, and is also signed. On the

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

ceiling are painted the sibyls, and the spaces between are filled with rich, harmonious colour.

We could gladly have stayed much longer in this chapel, for the frescoes seemed to us finer specimens of Pin-



PINTURICCHIO, SPELLO.

turicchio's work than anything we had seen at Perugia. In the sacristy is a beautiful Madonna by this painter. The mortuary chapel has a quaint pair of doors in perforated wood-work; near the west door we saw a curious square

SPELLO

bas-relief of ancient work, on two sides of it is carved an olive-tree, and on another side a man on horseback. It looked like an old burial urn.

The way was so steep for driving, that from the cathedral we walked on in search of the woman who had the keys of the church of San Andrea. She, however, being busy, handed us over to a young fellow with a face as lovely as Raffaelle's, and with those wonderful blue eyes, which have in them the glow of an Italian sky, not to be seen in more northern regions.

But at San Andrea, while we were looking at the Pinturicchio behind the high altar, a very courteous and intelligent priest came into the church. Seeing us, he kindly removed the cross which obstructed our view of the best part of the altar picture, the child San John the Baptist, who sits writing on his scroll at the feet of the Blessed Virgin. This figure is supposed to be Raffaelle's work. St. Francis and St. Lawrence are on

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

one side, St. Andrew and St. Gregory on the other; the embroidery on St. Lawrence's vestments is wonderfully painted, but as a whole this picture is not nearly so good as the frescoes by the same master in the cathedral.

The priest pointed out to us a graceful arcade surrounding the front and ends of an altar. This was discovered some years ago, concealed beneath a much larger altar which had been placed above the chest containing the bones of San Andrea ; he told us that when the bones were sought for, in order to remove them, the arcade was brought to light. The priest also showed us a fresco on the wall of the nave, and graphically related how he himself, only a few months before, had discovered it under the whitewash when the church was being cleaned for a festa. Who knows how many treasures still lie concealed on the church walls of these out-of-the-way towns ; it must be owned, however, that the newly found fresco at Spello is not

SPELLO

artistically a treasure, nor nearly as interesting as was the story of its discovery owing to its graphic telling.

From San Andrea our blue-eyed, gentle-spoken young guide led us to the top of the town, crowned by the deserted Capuchin convent. "They have sent all the brothers away," he said sadly; "there is but one left, and he may not live in the convent, he may only come up in the afternoon, and see the schoolboys play in the garden." There is a pathetic look about the deserted, peaceful old place. From the platform in front of it we enjoyed a splendid view; before us on one side was the ever-present Subasio, towering over all, and on the top of the hill behind stood Perugia, looking at this distance like some giant castle.

At our feet in the green valley was the amphitheatre of Spello; not so perfect as that at Fiesole, but with clearly defined tiers of grassed seats rising one above another.

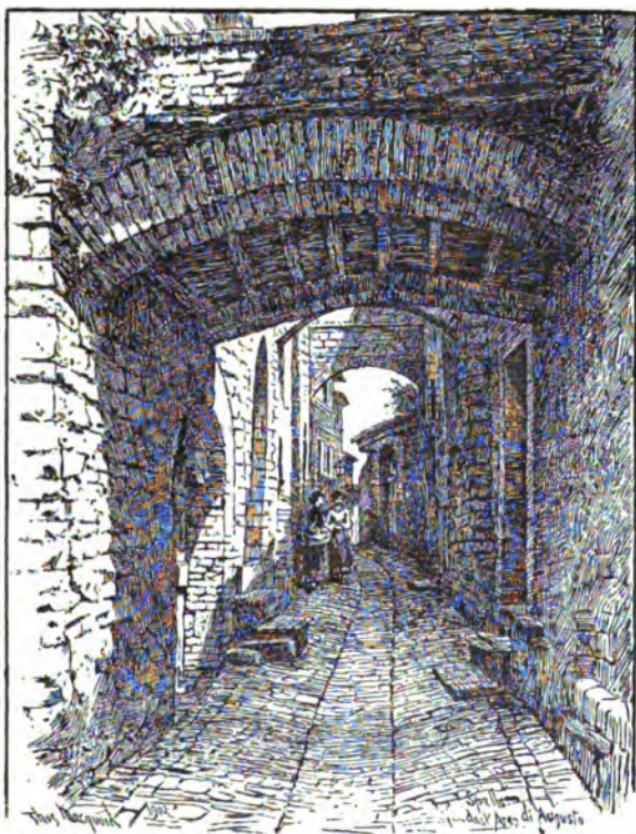
PICTURES IN UMBRIA

Porta Augusta is another interesting gateway. We came slowly down the steep street, getting constant peeps, between tall, grey houses, of the blue mountains around us. At one of these breaks in the wall a group of peasants sat, some spinning, some idling, beneath a vine that stretched on a trellis from house to house, the light filtering through the leaves became a golden green before it fell on the merry souls in the by-street below. The men of Spello look fine, robust fellows, and the women are very tall and erect.

One handsome grey-haired dame met us as we came down the ladder-like street ; she was spinning from a distaff in her hand. "Dio," she held it out to my companion, "che brutta lavoro!"

"Would that I could do it," was the prompt answer, and the old dame went off chuckling with delight.

The little town is like an eyrie high up in the air, the houses nestling here and there for shelter behind the grey walls.



POR TA AUGUSTA, SPELLO.

SPELLO

We saw so many bits by the way in Spello, that it seemed as if one might spend some pleasant days in such an exquisitely placed spot ; but we could not spy out any possible lodging ; and, after all, it is an easy distance by rail or carriage from Assisi or Foligno.

Coming home by train to Perugia, we travelled with a pleasant-looking Italian lady and her sad-faced husband. She also seemed sad, and constantly put her handkerchief to her eyes ; we fancied she was affected by some deep sorrow, and felt sympathy for her. The train presently stopped at a station ; her distress increased, she clasped her hands, and entreated her husband to get out of the carriage and see after the poor little "angiolo."

He gently refused, and at this she sobbed, and almost howled with anguish ; then, burying her face in her handkerchief, she leaned back and refused to be comforted.

At the next station we heard the

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

sharp yelping of a little dog, and then she cried out so loudly for the "povera bestia" that we began to understand. Seeing we were interested, she sat up, pocketed her handkerchief, and explained. "The officials have taken my dog from me, and have shut it up. Dio! the sweet angel would not hurt a soul," she said, with a fresh flow of tears; "its cries break my heart. It is a cruelty beyond belief."

At this her husband left the carriage, looking much ashamed of himself. When he came back he tried to pacify his still weeping wife.

"The dog is all right, cara mia," he said.

"Cara mia," however, would not listen, and she actually sobbed and cried all the way to Perugia, where we left her on the platform with her pocket-handkerchief rolled into a ball, and pressed close to her eyes.

CHAPTER VI

THE HEAVENLY CHOIR OF PERUGIA



POTS AT
WINDOW.

E had greatly desired to see the façade of the Oratory built in honour of San Bernardino of Siena, and we went in search of it. Going past the cloisters of the cathedral, we traversed the street beyond them: on one side is a fragment of an old palace, on the other a quaint series of ancient arches, one within the other, full of striking effects of light and shade.

A street descends steeply from this portal. We noted here, and in many of the old house-fronts, carved brackets, for holding flower-pots, built out from the walls, their grey stone making a

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

pleasant contrast to the brilliant red and orange of the flowers blossoming in pots placed within these hoary receptacles. We sometimes saw metal rings instead of stone brackets fastened into the wall, so as to hold a flower-pot.

A wealthy Englishman, staying in our hotel, became so enamoured of the quaint effect created by these stone brackets, that he told us he was resolved to transport some of them to the front wall of his newly-built London dwelling. He went to the owner of a house possessing several of the brackets, and offered him a round sum for a couple of them. The owner professed himself delighted with the offer ; he would most willingly gratify the English Signor's fancy.

"The Signore Inglese must, however, understand," he said, with a twinkle in his heavy-lidded dark eyes, "that these articles are not individual,—they are the same as the nose on the face, fixtures. To possess the brackets, the Signore Inglese must purchase the entire



VIA SANT' AGATA.

HEAVENLY CHOIR OF PERUGIA

front of the Palazzo, it is built all in one piece." This was too much for even an English collector ; he was obliged to quit Perugia without acquiring even one of the much-desired brackets.

As we went along, we saw, outside the door of an old grey house, a pretty, ragged, fair-haired child, jumping and dancing on her little bare feet, chattering, as it seemed, to the doorpost. She was trying to reach the knocker, and was talking merrily to the flies on the wall, by way of amusement while she waited.

Near the Church of S. Agata we inquired for the house of Perugino, but this Via de' Priori so winds and twists that we were told we were too far north, so we turned at a sharp angle, and after a little came to a silent open space in front of a church, the Chiesa Nuova.

Down an arched passage close by, and up a side street on the right, we reached Via Deliziosa ; in this Perugino's house is marked by a tablet. There

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

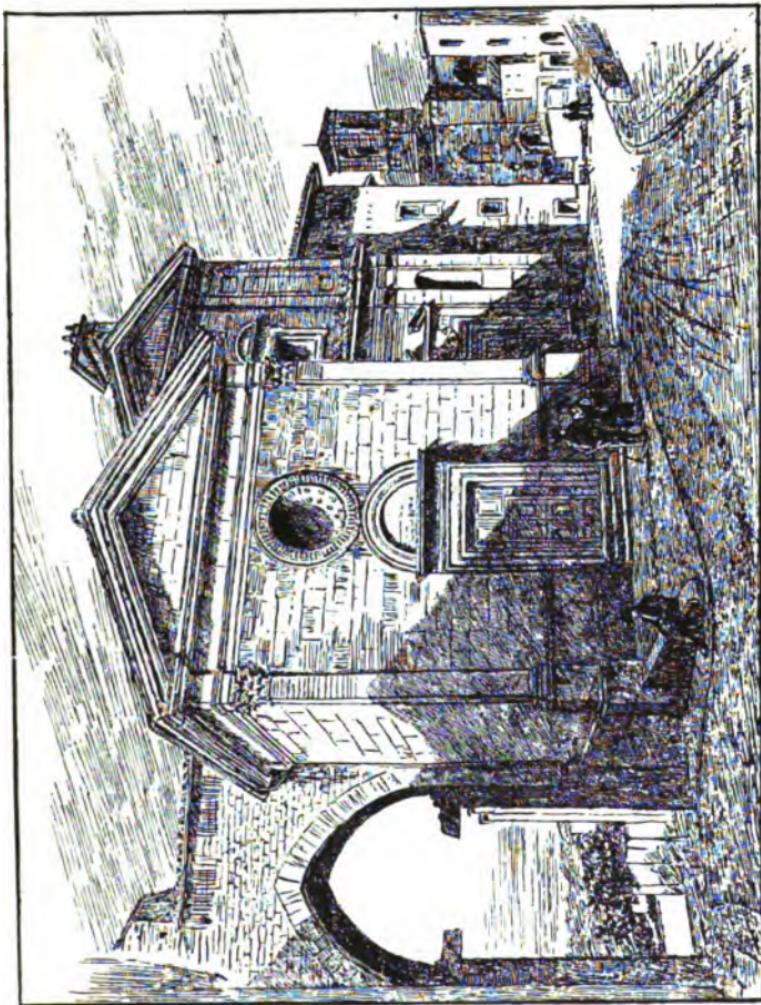
is nothing special in the appearance of the dwelling ; the hilly street in which it stands is grass-grown, and weirdly silent.

We went back again to seek for San Bernardino, and descended into a very old quarter of the city, the projecting claw which on this side overlooks the deep valley below Porta Susanna, and forms one point of the Cupa. We had to pass by the last remaining fortress of the nobles, the tall brick Torre degli Scalzi ; behind this are remains of the Etruscan wall.

Close by we saw another church, Madonna di Luce, a good example of Renaissance work, gay with a scarlet and gold curtain, in readiness for to-morrow's festa ; then, by a quaint little street with flights of brick steps leading down into most picturesque side-turnings, we came in sight of a small house, its grey stone balcony screened from the sunshine by a vine-wreathed pergola.

In a few minutes we reached the convent of San Francesco, beside which is

MADONNA DI LUCE.



HEAVENLY CHOIR OF PERUGIA

the matchless façade of the chapel or oratory of San Bernardino of Siena.

The detail of this façade is even more beautiful than we had expected ; the colour of its rosy marbles and terracotta adds warmth to the exquisite



FAÇADE OF SAN BERNARDINO.

sculptures. These seemed to us finer, both in design and execution, than any Della Robbia work we had seen. We were glad to find this opinion endorsed by Mr. Perkins in his Tuscan Sculptors. The façade is the work of Agostino Ducci or Gucci, of Florence.

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

A circular arch, almost as wide as the façade, surmounts two square-headed entrance doors ; these are surrounded by delicately carved ornament in low relief. Above the door is a frieze, on which are represented events in the life of San Bernardino ; over it, in the centre of the tympanum, which is deeply



ANGEL, SAN BERNARDINO.

recessed within the arch, is a Vesica, formed by tongues of flame containing a figure of the saint, said to be the best existing likeness of him. Four flying angels placed diagonally on either side of the Vesica seem to float as they offer their musical sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Six of them are playing various instruments ; the ex-



HEADS OF CHERUBIM, SAN BERNARDINO.

HEAVENLY CHOIR OF PERUGIA

pression in each countenance is varied. Some of the faces are very lovely, especially the two praying with uplifted heads ; the others seem to be chanting hymns of praise to the music of their respective instruments. The disposition of the angels' robes is perfect ; its studied grace reminded us of Lord Leighton's drapery, the whole effect being as artistic as it is original.

Filling up the rest of the tympanum, so as to make a background to the angels, there are the quaintest heads of cherubs cradled in lovely wings, carved in full relief. Some of these heads are missing, but those which remain are exquisite studies of baby faces, each with its own special expression, some roguish, others sweet and loving ; one of them seems to suppress a sob. There is infinite variety among them ; and all are so very human that they are doubtless tran-



ANGELS, SAN
BERNARDINO.

PICTURES IN UMBRIA.

scripts from fifteenth-century Perugian babies.

Winged creatures are carved in the spandrels of the arch ; and slightly below on either side is an angel within an arched niche, over which is a pediment, the mouldings and soffits showing deli-



ANGEL PLAYING,
SAN BERNARDINO.

cately sculptured ornament ; they are repeated below, and there are still other angels of the Heavenly Choir, playing musical instruments ; these are on the broad pilasters that support the arch ; some are in pairs, with very beautiful faces. The arrangement of their draperies is especially remarkable.

In all these figures and faces, besides the beauty of expression, there is a marvellous mingling of quaintness and grace ; they are so life-like that one almost listens for the sound of their instruments, in meet accompaniment to their chants, or to the hymns of

HEAVENLY CHOIR OF PERUGIA

the cherubs, who above and beside them are singing a chorus of praise. The Oratory is surmounted by a pediment, and in its tympanum we again find angels and cherubs. On the fringe of the pediment are the carved words—

AUGUSTA PERUSIA MCCCCLXI.

The illustrations help the reader's appreciation of this gem of Perugia ; mere words can only sketch, without giving an adequate idea of its beauty.

The authorities of the city were eager to show their appreciation of the wonderful reformation effected in its morals by the preaching of San Bernardino ; only a few years after his death, the building of this beautiful memorial was begun, and seems to have been completed about 1462.

Bernardino's father was governor of Massa ; in the year 1380, when Saint Catherine died in Siena, the future preacher was born in the little town.

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Early left an orphan, he was tenderly reared by three aunts, all excellent women. He, unlike his great prototype, seems not to have shared the fashionable vices of other youths of the period ; he was from an early age bent on following, so far as he could, the example left him two hundred years earlier by Saint Francis of Assisi.

He spent some time in that convent of Fiesole which educated Fra Angelico and others, ardent to revive in their generation the work of St. Francis, which had suffered eclipse. Various reasons have been given for this, chief among them being the pagan tendency of the Renaissance teaching, and also the frequent visitations of plague, which seem almost to have emptied the convents, sweeping off the monks and nuns who gave up their lives to tend the sick in hospitals. In most of the Italian states and cities the descendants of devout Christians had become fierce and brutal, as unrestrained in appetite

HEAVENLY CHOIR OF PERUGIA

as they were murderous and lawless in deeds. Some of these have already been narrated. Princes and nobles strove to surpass the citizens in evil-doing by the hideous tragedies they enacted. This had been especially the case for many years in Perugia, whose inhabitants had come to be designated by the epithet “ferocious”: they were so given up to every sort of crime.

Bernardino was deeply stirred by the evil report that reached him from all parts of the country; he had already been received into the Minor Conventual Order of San Francis, and had signalised his courage by nursing and ministering to the plague-stricken inmates of the hospital in Siena. This had injured his health, but he gladly obeyed the commission given by his superior, to journey through a certain part of Italy, preaching as he went.

Already the evangelising movement was in the air: in France, a Spaniard, San Vincent Ferrier, had reaped a bounti-

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ful harvest of souls. Bernardino determined by God's help to evangelise his country, and to rescue souls from evil by the winning power of love. He decided to begin his crusade in Umbria, in the powerful city of Perugia, so notorious for the crimes of its blood-stained nobles and the frivolity and vanity of their women.

Bernardino lodged in a convent outside the city gate, and went every morning to preach in the Piazza Pubblico. Crowds had flocked to hear his first sermon, but he had a consciousness that this was mere excitement, and that the souls of his listeners were yet to be won. One day he told his congregation that he proposed before long to show them the Evil One. This announcement sent the multitude crazy with excitement ; the throngs of his listeners were doubled. But for some days after Bernardino preached only in an ordinary fashion.

Still the people believed he would keep faith with them, and each day

HEAVENLY CHOIR OF PERUGIA

brought a larger crowd of expectant listeners. At last, one morning, Bernardino said, "I am now going to fulfil my promise; I will show you not one devil only, for there are several here." Then, raising his voice, "Look at one another, you will each see Satan in your neighbour's face; every one of you does that Evil One's bidding." He then pointed out seriously, and with much pathos, the sins that reigned among them, and implored his hearers to renounce their evil practices. The effect of his words was wonder-striking. Families who had lived in hatred of their fellow-citizens for more than a generation, hurried forward, and, clasping the hands of their once-detested foes, begged forgiveness for wrongs committed; in more than one instance, with halters round their necks, they besought pardon for the evil they had wrought. Bernardino saw that the devotion of the city was roused, and, turning to the women, he commanded

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them to cause two huge fires to be lighted on the Piazza.

"Set a pattern to your men," he exclaimed; "prove the reality of your penitence; cast into the flames the gauds by which Satan tempts you to ensnare mankind to their ruin; bring hither your cosmetics, your perfumes, your false tresses, and the garlands with which you deck them, your sumptuous robes, all the vanities you possess, and cast them into the flames."

Sobbing and weeping, the women rushed off to obey him; they soon returned laden with the vanities denounced by the preacher, and, like the Florentines many years later, they cast their prized adornments into the huge fires.

An old chronicler relates that one noble dame cherished a long false tress of singular beauty, which had always commanded admiration; she felt that this would prove a worthy offering. Taking it from its casket, she was about

HEAVENLY CHOIR OF PERUGIA

to hurry with it to the Piazza ; she again looked at it.

No, she could not make the sacrifice, the tress was too lustrous, too lovely ; more than all, it became her so rarely. Her heart failed her. She put it back in the casket, with a smile of contempt at her own superstition ; she was closing the lid, when suddenly the beauteous tress sprang up and struck her violently on the cheekbone. She cried out with pain and terror ; then, forcing the temptation into the casket and closing the lid, she fled back to the Piazza, and flung the treasured lock into the flames.

For a while after this famous preaching, peace and devotion returned to the hill-city ; then came sad outbreaks and dissensions, and Bernardino, hearing the disturbing news, returned to Perugia. He exhorted his former penitents to seek after the grace and the love which had once been granted them, and at the close of the year 1425 he once more left

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them in peace one with another ; while he went to preach elsewhere in Umbria, and finally to Gubbio, to Viterbo, and to Orvieto.

Two years later, when preaching in Siena, he held up the conversion of the people of Perugia as an example to be followed by the Sienese.

CHAPTER VII

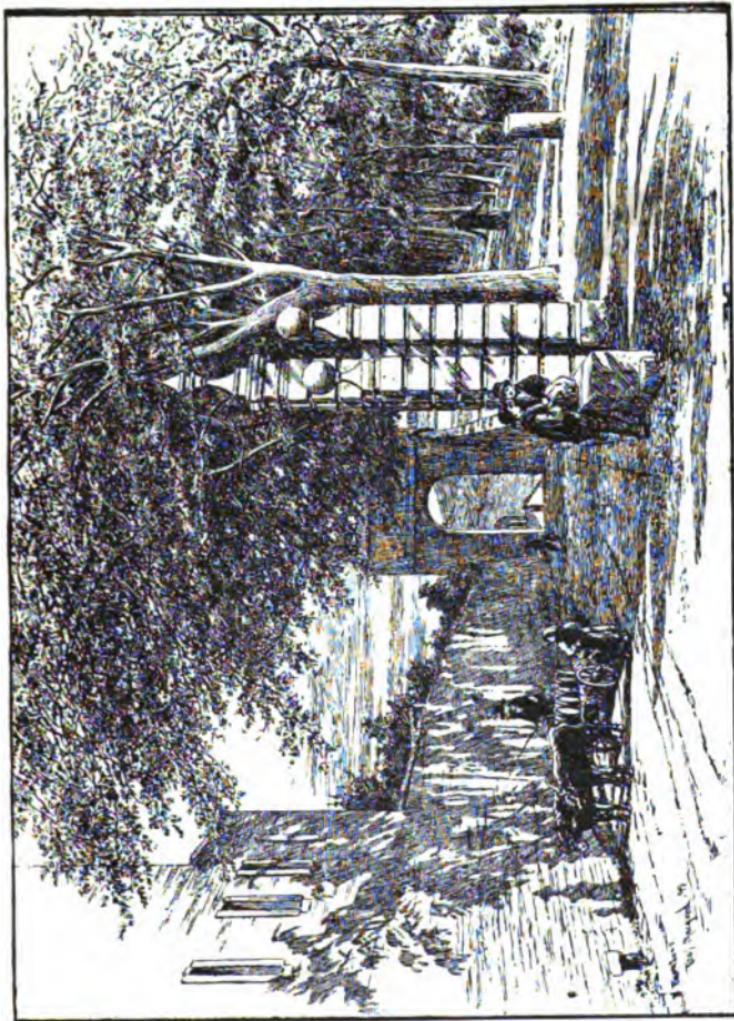
SAN PIETRO DE' CASINENSI

THE most remarkable church in Perugia is the church, at the end of the southern point of the city, attached to the convent of San Pietro; below it is the gate named after San Costanzo, said to have been the first Bishop of Perugia. On the opposite side of the way from the convent wall is a pleasant public resort, shaded by trees, called Passeggiata Pubblica. From this point, looking down the steep road, one gets a delightful view of the near valley and distant Apennines, framed in by the arch of Porta Costanzo. This view goes by the name of La Veduta. La Veduta and a lovely country walk beyond the gate are associated with the memory of that

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

accomplished artist and delightful companion, Lord Leighton. He dearly loved the old hill-city; in its delightful quiet he used to write his lecture for the Royal Academy students. One of his favourite walks was to go out by the Porta Costanzo, and along the lovely lanes beyond it, grown over with honeysuckle, wild gourd, and an abundance of wild myrtle.

The ancient church of San Pietro, with its very picturesque exterior and campanile, serves as a conspicuous landmark in the country over which it gazes. It is said to be the oldest church in Perugia, and to be built on the site of an Etruscan temple; it was certainly in old days the first cathedral. Built by Pietro, a saintly abbot of the monastery in the tenth century, it seems to have remained for a long period almost untouched; in the fourteenth century the campanile was considered one of the wonders of Italy. A century later it was restored and decorated with rich



LA VEDUTA, PERUGIA.

SAN PIETRO DE' CASINENSI

Renaissance work, some of which is very fascinating and interesting. Then came a warlike abbot, resolved to convert the very salient tower of San Pietro into a fortress to overawe the surrounding country ; and also to use it as a means of defence against the ever-turbulent people of Perugia, and the despots who were always quarrelling among themselves in order to attain supreme power in the city.

The campanile was still further injured by Pope Boniface the Ninth, who also wished to construct an ordinary fortress on the site of the beautiful tower. Finally, the monks rebuilt it at a great cost. It was then struck by lightning, and severely damaged. For a long period of time the injuries caused by lightning were so frequent that it was feared the entire building would suffer ruin ; then at last the idea of a lightning conductor suggested itself. This saved the campanile, and it has since remained in its present condition.

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

We went up the steps in the convent wall, and entered the old church of San Pietro from the courtyard, by a doorway with a deeply carved heading in marble. The interior is at once rich and fascinating, and every subsequent visit we made to it revealed many treasures.

Some of the Perugino pictures in the sacristy are worth examination, but the large altar-piece he painted for this church was carried away to Paris by Napoleon Bonaparte. The choir books can be seen here, illuminated by the monks of San Miniato, near Florence. There are several pictures in the church ; in one of the aisles is a painting by the early Umbrian master, Benedetto Bonfigli. The ancient, dark grey columns on either side of the nave are much older than the church, having been brought here from the curious old church at Porta San Angelo, near the most northern gate of Perugia. We had already seen sixteen of these

SAN PIETRO DE' CASINENSI

columns in the ancient round church ; they are supposed to date from a very early period. The altar tomb of the Baglioni, by Fieado, is in San Pietro ; but the most remarkable feature of this church is its choir. The stalls and their seats are full of exquisitely carved wood-work, and the doors at the east end are marvellous specimens of intarsia work. The sacristan shows them with great pride, and then opens the doors which lead on to the balcony behind.

Below us we see a very lovely picture : the fertile valley and its surroundings of richly - tinted hills, while in front is Assisi, clinging to the side of rugged Monte Subasio. It is said that three citizens of Perugia escaped by means of this balcony from the Pope's Swiss guards, when, less than fifty years ago, the Swiss forcibly took possession of the convent. The delicate work of the eastern doors was executed by Fra Damiano of Bergamo ; it is singularly beautiful ; perhaps the finding of Moses

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in the bulrushes is one of the most curious subjects depicted.

The choir seats and stalls were done by Damiano's brother, Stefano da Bergamo. They are worth a very careful examination, for, besides the intarsia on the backs and seats, and the fine carving of the poppy-heads, notable both for subject and execution, there are, between each stall, wonderful and beautifully-modelled creatures. Now we see a beast like a crocodile, and next it a harpy; then an elephant, a dolphin, a sphinx, and so on; an infinite variety, almost every creature is different, and the carving of each is most artistic.

We saw many treasures in the church, before we went out into the cypress-bordered garden of the convent, and again enjoyed the lovely view from the top of its high wall,—the view which wearied Popes and other great and jaded personages have taken pleasure in gazing at when they came to Perugia for refreshment.

SAN PIETRO DE' CASINENSI

An intelligent - looking priest showed us the garden. He said it was kept in order by the boys belonging to the convent. This formerly sheltered a reformatory for lads sentenced to prison for their first offence. It is now, I believe, used as an Agricultural College. We had previously noticed the reformatory boys at work on the olive fields outside the town gates, and had admired the picturesque effect of their blue uniforms and straw hats against the silver grey of the leafy background.

They had then come trooping into the cloisters, and on close inspection they did not look so interesting as we had thought them ; some of them, however, had simple, honest faces, and as they passed into the cloister they smiled and raised their hats to the Fra. Most of the bigger fellows had an ugly scowl, and went in with bent heads, without any greeting.

The Fra told us the lads behaved fairly well ; his trouble was to find

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suitable employment for them when they were discharged from the reformatory. He said he greatly approved of English laws, especially in regard to the working class. "The English are so good to foreigners," he said.

He asked us what would be the cost in London of a working-man's board and lodging. We told him that we had in England already too many boys of this sort, for whom it was difficult to find employment; we, however, gave him an average of the expenses he inquired about. This seemed to alarm the good Padre; with lifted hands he said, "Such a plan would prove far too costly, it would teach the lads expensive habits of living." But he thanked us courteously for our information. When we left the convent garden we stood again enjoying the view over the lovely valley, under a glorious sunset which glowed on the distant hills. It seemed to us that splendid sunsets were another and special charm of Perugia.

SAN PIETRO DE' CASINENSI

We had meant this evening to visit the Etruscan sepulchres of the Volumnii, discovered only about sixty years ago, and within a walk of the San Costanzo gate; but San Pietro, even in this short visit, had proved such an interesting study, that we saw we must defer our walk to the ancient tomb.

We were, however, told that, without much adding to the length of our walk, we should considerably increase its charm, if, instead of passing out by the Porta Costanzo, we turned aside by the Porta San Pietro, or Romana, as it is called, and quitted the city by the little gate at the bottom of the descent. This is indeed a delightful walk under the old grey walls, and from it one has a perfect view over the lovely country and the purple hills.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TOMBS OF THE VOLUMNII



GIRL'S HEAD.

FEW days later, as we went along a lane, with grassy flower - pied banks, and with purple hills as background to the sunlit glory which surrounded us, we recognised the delightful landscape so frequently used by Perugino. The way was rather long, but there was more in it to interest than to tire us. We at last arrived at the dark descent beside the road, which forms the entrance to the sepulchre of the Volumnii. Many years ago there was supposed to be a necropolis existing in this hill, and on excavation several small cells were discovered. In more recent years an ox was seen

THE TOMBS OF THE VOLUMNII

suddenly to stumble on the hill above, and to be unable to rise. Going to help it, beneath the hole into which the creature had thrust its foot a subterranean arch was revealed, and subsequent excavation brought to light the wonderful, long-closed tombs of the Etruscan Volumnii.

We went down some rugged steps to the mouth of the gloomy cavern, and found ourselves in a dark passage-way, with stone benches on either side. The weird, mysterious atmosphere of the Etruscan vault is indescribable. Several chambers or cells, in this underground house of the departed, branch out on either side of the dark vaulted passage, but we saw them in such semi-darkness, that by the light of a single torch it was very difficult to make out details. As we went along the dark vault, our guide raised his torch on high. In a moment we seemed to be in an enchanted cavern, where the silent inhabitants were guarded by strange forms ; gorgon heads,

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

owls, and serpents stared at us from roof and walls. We could fancy that, as we passed by, the snake heads seemed to dart from the walls, to bristle and hiss ; and the grand Medusa-faces overhead looked down on us full of dire warning, when at the end of the passage we entered the tomb of the Etruscan family. Here are the Volumnii sitting in a group, realistic terra-cotta figures guarding their urns, just as they have been guarding them for perhaps two thousand years.

Aruns Volumni, the father, reclines on his sarcophagus, which is guarded by two furies ; on his left his daughter sits on her urn, and on his right is his son. Their faces look dull and uninteresting, but they seem aware of their own importance. The fourth figure of the group, seated next the son of Aruns, is Veilia, his fair young wife. She has an exquisite face, and one is not surprised to learn that she died young ; she must have felt isolated among

THE TOMBS OF THE VOLUMNII

such unsympathetic family surroundings. Her face and those of the majestic solemn-eyed Medusas are the most interesting treasures of the tomb. All the faces and figures of the Volumnii are intensely life-like; Aruns himself has a purse-proud expression.

Coming out into welcome fresh air and daylight, we saw that the entrance to the tomb was fringed by a profusion of maidenhair fern, growing between the blocks of travertine. A weird-faced child, with dark eyes shining through a tangle of dusky hair, showed a brilliant gleam of white teeth as she offered us tufts of this fern ruthlessly torn out by its roots. She seemed the uncanny guardian of the place.

Another walk with an outlook less splendid than that of the Veduta and others, yet with a special charm of its own, was a great favourite with us. To reach it one has to go past the interesting old church of San Ercolano, instead of

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turning up beside it, till some iron gates are arrived at ; outside these, the way was blocked on the right, so we turned leftwards, and followed the course of the picturesque old wall ; ancient houses rise above it, and the wall itself is crowned with flowers in pots and stone vases. Here and there we saw vine-wreathed loggias ; then, at the far end of a sudden turn, there came into view Monte Luce, with its old church and convent, and grand blue hills rising beyond. I believe the church is really called Santa Maria Assunta ; it is the bourne of a yearly pilgrimage at the time of the great cattle fair, which takes place on the green down across the road.

We passed through the open convent gate into a quaint and peaceful scene, a small grassed quadrangle closed in by a wall and the sacristan's house ; facing us was the west front of the church, with a large window under its low gable. The church wall

THE TOMBS OF THE VOLUMNII

itself is checkered with squares of red and white stone. The two green doors, under a double arch, were almost as vivid in colour as the lizards basking between the stones. On the right was a low and singularly massive campanile ; its huge blue and white clock-face giving a peculiar quaintness to the place. There is a projecting side chapel below, with slit-like windows ; beyond this is a cloister walk, its low tiled roof supported by solid white-washed piers. This cloister goes on to the angle where the convent buildings adjoin the church, and extends from this angle along the southern and eastern sides of the little green square to the entrance gates ; on one side is an upper storey, reached by a flight of bricked steps.

A woman, sad and quiet-looking, but with a sweet expression on her olive-hued face, showed us the church, and the little choir of the Sisters behind the high altar. She told us how the nuns from the suppressed and desecrated

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

convent of Santa Giuliana "had been driven to take refuge in this blessed house of Santa Maria Assunta." She added with a deep sigh, "Who knows what will happen next?"

It seemed sad that such a peaceful home as this should be threatened.

A few steps beyond this church brought us to a low wall; here we sat and enjoyed the distant view framed in by tall trees. It differs from any other point in Perugia, in having a more varied foreground. This is broken up by green hills, with bright-looking country houses nestling among gardens and orchards, and surrounded by dark trees; behind are the ever-beautiful Apennines; between, in mid distance, is that mingling of colour created by the luxuriant vegetation of this fertile valley. It was varied on this evening by cloud-shadows cast on its mellowed sunny glow.

While we sit enjoying all this beauty, the Angelus sounds in sweet harmony

THE TOMBS OF THE VOLUMNII

with the scene ; three, four, five, then one long drawn-out solemn note.

From the frequent campaniles the bells call one to another, and give deep-toned musical response across the green hollows that vandyke themselves up the walled hillside into the town ; the brilliant sunset showing in bold relief the salient balconies of a Palazzo not far away.

We came back into the city by another gate, and lost our way. Finally, however, we turned up a very steep street, and then down flights of steps by the church of San Fiorenzo. There is here a curious old wall with a garden above it ; a workman told us it was the curate's garden.

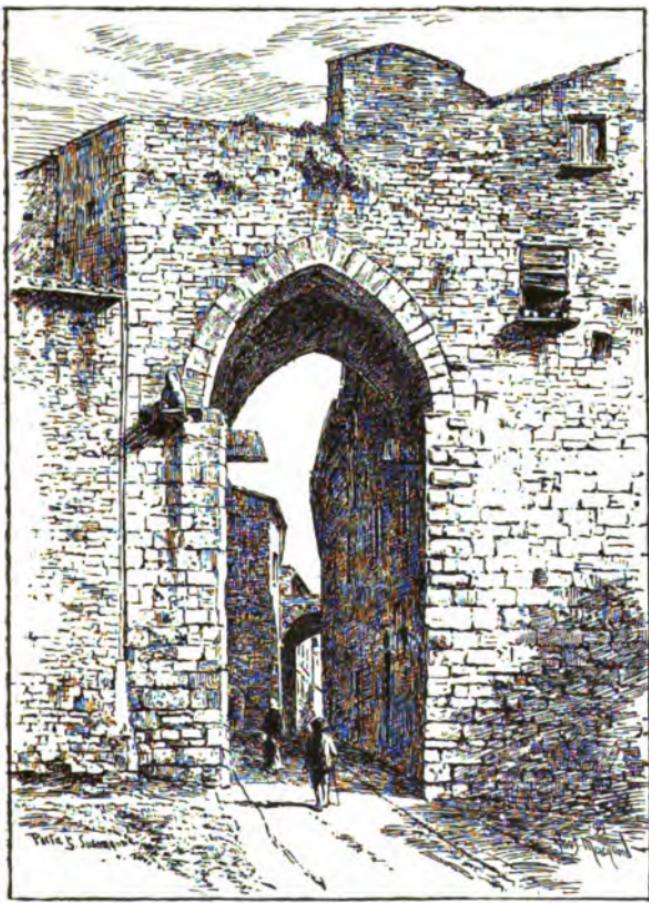
In the lingering gleams of sunlight, oleander blossoms overhead were glowing masses of colour against the grey stone wall.

CHAPTER IX

THE VIA APPIA

THE Oratory of San Bernardino is near to gardens, orchards, and drying grounds. Beyond the convent of San Francesco the ancient wall goes northward, and then turns east towards the Porta Augusta, but this afternoon we went southwards.

A short walk down a steep narrow street beneath an archway led us out of the low-browed passage of the Etruscan Porta Susanna on to the wall itself. This rises up directly from La Cupa, as the indentation which the valley here makes is called. The wall follows the curves of the hills, always keeping close to the edge of the descent, and, as I have already said,



POR TA SUSANNA

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THE VIA APPIA

where an angle is sharply turned a bold round tower stands out sentinel-wise against the blue sky.

Below the wall the fertile dell was literally covered with vines, olives, fig and mulberry trees ; plots of blue-green cabbage and shining lettuce covered bare spaces of brown earth. In winter a torrent flows through the Cupa.

To-day the long range of hill on the left looked red-brown, variegated with green and grey ; behind its shoulder a more distant mountain showed opal ; tall regular houses of the ancient city rose one behind another on the right, and the last brick tower, that of the Scalzi, rose above them all.

The wall makes here an inward angle before it goes out far away westward to another point of the star-shaped hill, and here the view becomes more beautiful. The outlines of the mountains cross, and reveal through the openings yet another ridge behind, and this farther ridge looks a delicate opal, while the

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

sunbeams become less powerful. On the right the hills stretched in two purple undulating lines, between them a rosy vapour moved slowly, deepening in tint as it rose towards the orange-coloured clouds. Masses of grey now sent up warnings from below, and partly obscured the rosy vapour; southward the grey took a lurid tinge, and across it floated pale phantom-like cloudlets. The far-off hill, as we looked southward, had become a purple-blue, while the town in the space between climbed upwards in terraces, the houses bowered in vines and garden blossoms.

This is not so extended a prospect as some others that are to be had from the walls of Perugia, but I am inclined to consider it one of the most interesting, from the double view it offers of the town and of the quaint formation of the steep-sided, triangular valley, with its mysterious depth of vegetation below.

We kept along the wall for some

THE VIA APPIA

distance, then our road led us away from it between old stone garden walls, supports for vines and figs, and brilliant orange begonia blossoms which peep above them. Quaint side-streets looked tempting on our left. Going up one of these, we found a portion of Etruscan wall with an opening in it of the same period of stone-work.

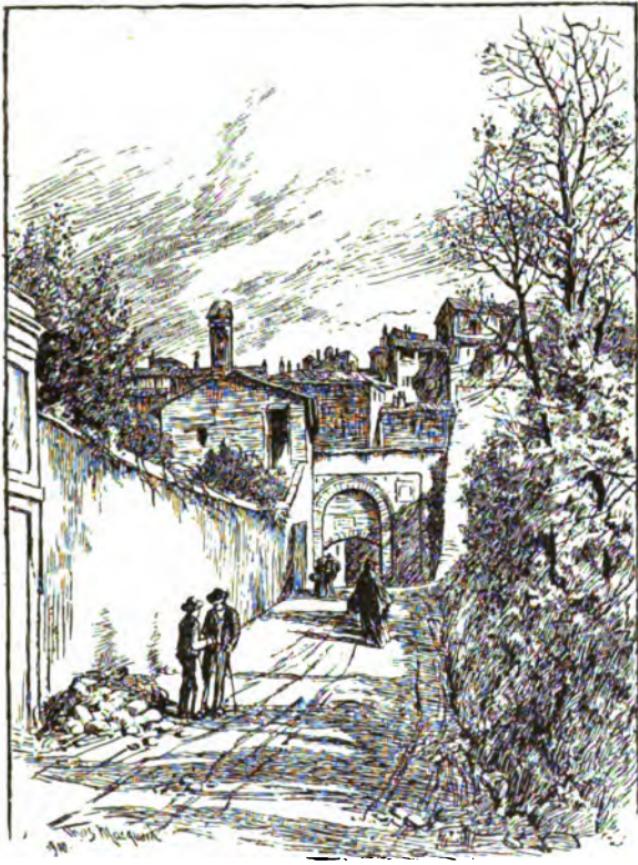
The street beyond mounted steeply to where a brick arch spanned it : on one side a flight of broken steps led up to a tall house above the wall ; a loggia, corbelled out from between the house and the grey pointed arch, was filled with charming foliage and flowers ; an iron crane projected from the balcony over a brick water-tank beside the broken steps. The variety of form and colour was most vivid against the shadow within the arch ; its two projecting imposts were massive slabs of travertine, and beside one of these, gleaming out of the shadow, was a little shrine with a nosegay of freshly-gathered flowers.

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In and out of narrow streets, up and down quaint steps, we reached at last the Ivory Gate, the Etruscan Porta Eburnea,—that very quaintly-placed old gate, from which a steep road goes down into the country.

We had here an extended view of the wall, curving grandly forward to a projecting point, and completely obscuring all view of La Cupa; the point itself crowned by a most picturesque round tower, standing out vividly from its background of purple hills.

The road from Porta Eburnea looked attractive. On this special day it was thronged with peasants going home from market. Some of the women stopped outside the gate; taking off their boots, they slung them over their shoulders, or put them in their baskets; then, with brown bare feet and legs, they went down the steep dusty road with rapid, swinging steps. Most of these bare-footed women wore handsome coral necklaces; and yet shopkeepers



PORTA EBURNEA

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THE VIA APPIA

asked from eighty to three hundred francs for a string of these beads. Just outside the gate a man and several boys were playing some game with walnuts.

Coming home one evening from the twisting way behind the cathedral, we



OUTSIDE PERUGIA.

reached a lofty arched opening with "Via Appia" printed on one side. The arch itself has a house above it; a second arch within, with grey projecting imposts, shows a broad steep descent, — a long flight of shallow brick steps, so undecided as to the course they shall

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take that they curve first one way and then another, before they reach the bottom of the descent.

Some way down, a viaduct supported by three broad arches comes out beside the stone-edged brick steps, while transversely right and left are stone walls; that on the right is high and massive, and from its grey-green stones were hanging long garlands of white-blossomed caper plant.

Beyond, just before the wall joins some old stone houses, we saw a little pergola covered with the tender green of the vine. From the deep hollow into which the steps descend the town rises up in front, and as we go down, the old houses on our left, with gardens and orchards, stand at a great height above us, looking black against the glowing sky.

From this viaduct is an extended view over many curious roofs covered with semicircular tiles, frosted with gold and silver lichens and patches of green moss.



Via Appia
Perugia

Thos Mazzillard 1821

VIA APPIA AND TOWN.

K

THE VIA APPIA

First comes a series of gardens, green with vines and fig-trees ; beyond these, among the grey houses and trees, appears the great modern building of the University. Beyond it is the silk factory of Count Faina ; behind all are the purple hills.

Instead of crossing the viaduct we went down to the bottom of the seemingly interminable brick staircase, catching sight through the viaduct arches on the left of a succession of pictures : cottages backed by trees with children in front at play, all in a vivid effect of light and shade, framed in by the low, broad arches.

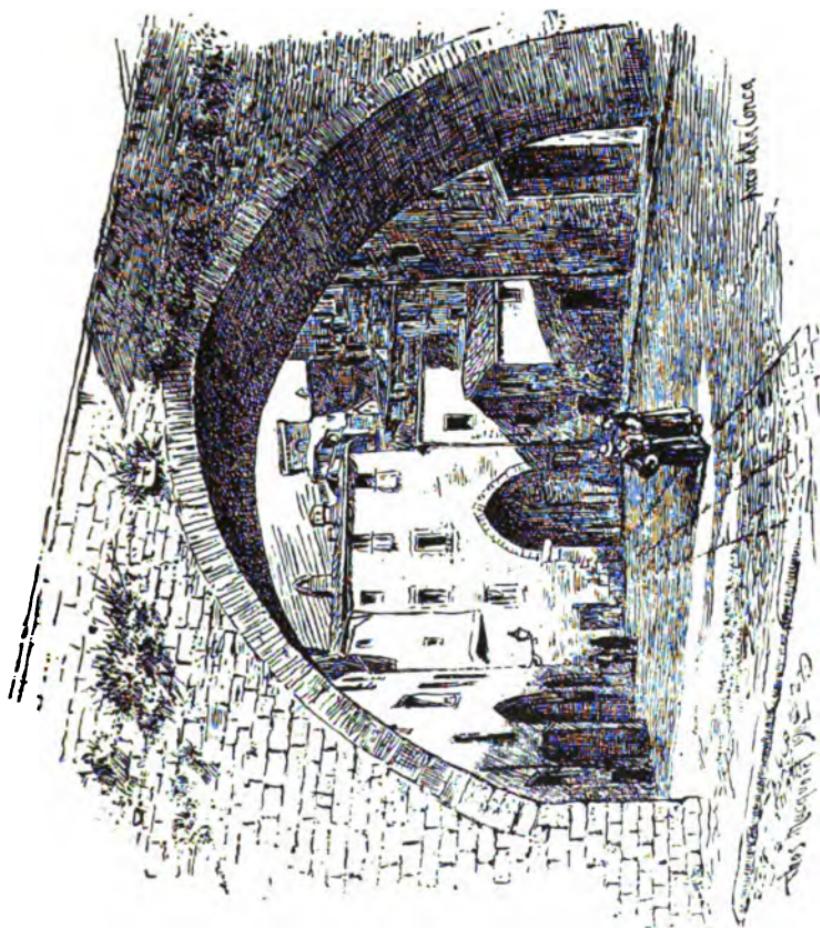
This brought us finally on to a road leading back into the town, spanned on the left by another broad arch of the viaduct. Through this a group of feathered acacias glowed golden-green in the sunshine against picturesque houses backed by the hills.

The pointed arch on the right looks quaint, from the contrast of its huge

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

grey stones and small many-shaped windows, mostly open ; some of them gay with scarlet flowers ; one window had a faded green curtain, drawn half across ; a bird-cage hung outside it. Behind the curtain the olive-hued face of a woman peeped out.

Through the arch was a strong effect of golden light and blue-purple shadow ; while we looked behind, there came a donkey, driven by a merry-eyed, bare-footed lad, dragging a cart heaped with brushwood. A little way on along the road is the mosaic pavement discovered several years ago in some Roman baths. The pavement is in singularly good preservation, and the design is very remarkable. Orpheus, a colossal black figure on a white ground, sits with outstretched arm, while a lion, a tiger, an elephant, a hippopotamus, stags, a rhinoceros, a horse, birds of various kinds, a snail, a monkey, a tortoise, and other creatures are drawn towards him from all sides.



ARCO DELLA CONCA, PERUGIA.

THE VIA APPIA

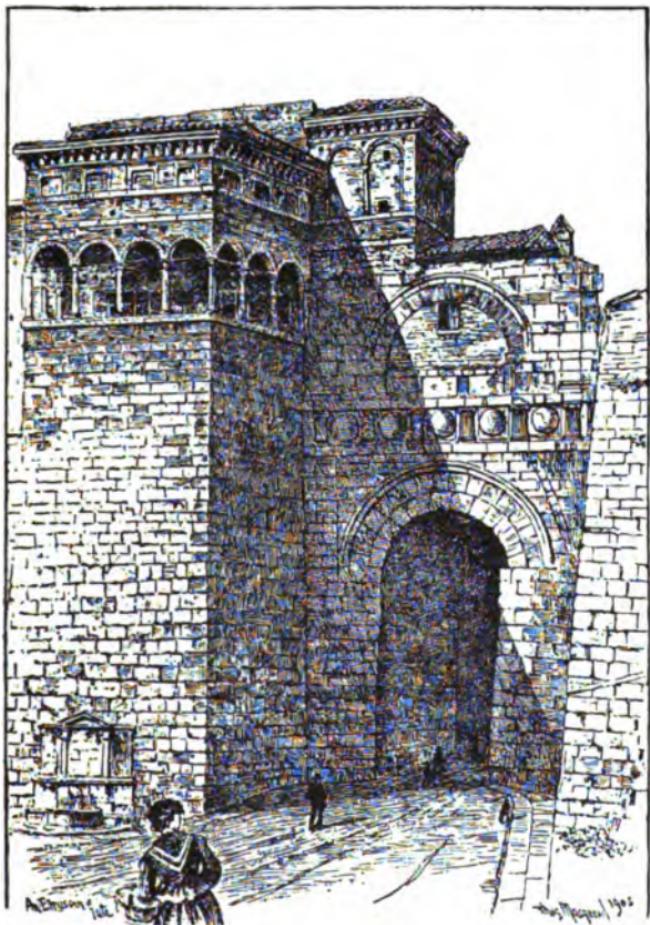
A handsome dark-eyed girl kept on sweeping dust from the mosaic, and was eager to point out that the brick-work on one side has not been examined, and probably hides a good deal more of the pavement, as yet unexcavated. The girl was so bright and good to look at, that she seemed quite a part of the show. Turning through the arch, we very soon reached Piazza Grimani, which has on one side the Palazzo Antinori. Close by is the wonder of Perugia—the Etruscan gateway, or, as it is called from the inscription set over it by the Romans when they took the city, the Porta Augusta. It was growing dusk, and the effect of this grand mass of stone-work was stupendous. On each side of the arched gateway are massive towers,—the upper part of the structure is less ancient than the towers are; one of them is surmounted by a loggia. Some of the blocks of stone in the Etruscan part of the wall are enormous, many of them

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

four feet long, and within the gloom of the arch is the wall, built on the same gigantic scale.

As we went home through the narrow, dark Via Vecchia, we saw a very quaint scene. In a long, dark room, dimly lighted by two oil-lamps hanging from the ceiling, a man and woman were selling soup and cold meat at a sort of counter. The brown characteristic faces and shining eyes of their ragged customers told out wonderfully as occasional gleams from the lamps above singled them from the semi-darkness. In this street we saw many examples of the walled-up doors by which the dead had been formerly carried out, closed up, so that the living might never pass by the same way.

Our next view of Porta Augusta was by daylight. We had been told by some one staying in Perugia where to seek a special point of view from the old walls near this arch. The Porta Augusta is even finer in full light, which



POR TA AUGUSTA. PERUGIA.

THE VIA APPIA

reveals the immense strength of its construction. When one considers that these great blocks of stone must have been brought from a long distance, it is sad to think of the poor slaves whose labour brought them and set them in their places for their Etruscan masters. Near here must have been the house of that chief citizen who, seeing the Romans, headed by Octavius Cæsar, masters of his native city, and that there was no longer a hope of freedom from the detested yoke, set fire to his dwelling, and burned himself and his whole family therein, heedless that the blaze spreading in all directions destroyed the chief part of Etruscan Perugia.

Instead of following the Via Lungari, or Garibaldi, on this occasion, our instructions sent us down a narrow street in a parallel direction, until we were stopped by the inward curve of the city wall. Just before we reached this, our way was blocked by two wine carts laden with barrels of new-made wine, and

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drawn by a pair of huge cream-coloured oxen, with soft dark eyes and long horns reaching from one side of the street to the other. I delight in these splendid creatures ; they look so gentle, and though so huge they seem unconscious of their power. They moved on at last, and permitted us to reach our bourne.



PORTA BULIGAIA.

uglia, had so kindly told us how to take this walk ; for the little narrow street opposite the Porta Augusta had hitherto escaped our notice, although we had spent so many weeks in Perugia.

Just before the old wall reaches the Porta it curves into a trefoil, and goes

THE VIA APPIA

down steeply to the fertile valley. Through the open, green doors of the gate the road winds beside the grand wall, which, covered with greenery, strikes forward to the north, tall grass atop waving like pennons among the trees above it.

The inner wall sends out a long flank to reach the gate, and above, level with its top, is a vine-covered pergola with quaint gabled houses behind it; these command a grand view over the hills which circle round in shades of exquisite blue, fading at last to opal. Plots of maize glow through a grey mist of olives; the vines, swinging from tree to tree, are golden-green. As the road goes down beside the wall beyond the gate, it passes a white-walled cottage nestled in trees. The view tempted us along this road, and soon a path, bordered by a black handrail, mounted on the left beside a caper-wreathed wall of stones: following it, we crossed a sort of farmyard, where an enormous gourd

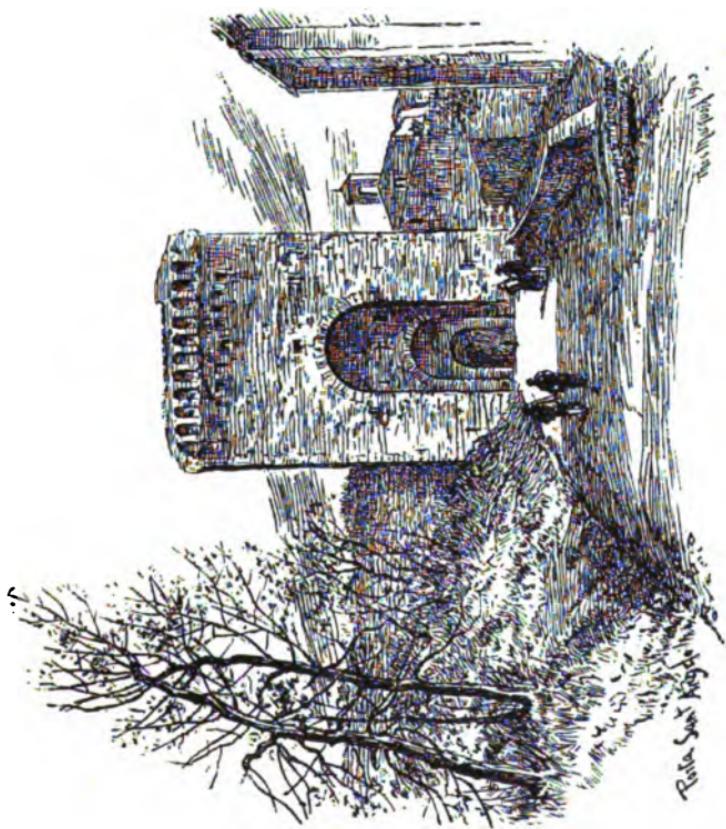
PICTURES IN UMBRIA

vine lay atop a brick wall ; huge pumpkins were sunning themselves among enormous leaves.

Beyond this, towards Perugia, the land was richly cultivated ; maize and vegetables, fruit-trees and vines, covered every scrap of ground. Here and there a tangled bit of hedge served to prop the luxuriant vines ; there was no primness anywhere, and yet the ground seemed well cultivated.

Going on, the way curved, and the view became still more extended ; at last we found ourselves in the road again, and went on till we reached the extreme northern point of Perugia—Porta San Angelo.

Some little way outside is the convent of San Francesco, and just within the gate, from which, up a side path, there is another delightful view, we came to the round church of San Angelo, or San Michele. This is very ancient, and is said to have been formerly a pagan temple dedicated to Vesta.



POR TA SAN ANGELO.

THE VIA APPIA

The lower part is round, the upper eight-sided, but the interior is circular. The upper portion is supported by a circle of sixteen dark-grey columns; anciently there were three circles of these columns. All but one of the two outer circles have been taken away to other parts of Perugia: we had already seen some in San Pietro, and there are two in one of the palaces on the market-place; one still remains in the second circle at San Angelo. This interior is very interesting. In it is a well-preserved sacrificial altar, and the woman who guided us explained with much unction how the victims were formerly sacrificed. She also showed us some horrible instruments of torture, and another altar, said to be Roman. There is a curious bas-relief on the wall near the sacristy. We had already seen this church on a festa, when, the altar blazing with candles, the gaily-dressed people kneeling in front of it and between the surrounding circle of pillars, had a very

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picturesque effect,—marred, it is true, by the presence of sundry dogs among the worshippers, and the extremely cracked and untuneful sounds proceeding from the music gallery. Our brown-faced, withered guide was full of talk ; when we got into the sacristy, she confided to me she had been foolish enough to marry late in life ; then, her man had managed so badly that he died and left her to take care of herself. “ Ah, yes,” she said, “ and there is more than myself, there is a boy, and he is nine years old ; he eats well,—the Signora knows how a boy eats at nine ? Dio ! he is voracious ; then he must be taught, and school costs money, much money ! and yet, Dio ! what a thing it is to have schooling ! I can neither read nor write, and can earn but little ; I wish my son to do better than I, and yet, Signora, I am not sure if it is wise.” Her keen black eyes twinkled at me.

I suggested that she must be right in giving her son some schooling. She

THE VIA APPIA

sighed heavily, and darted another keen glance at me out of her hungry dark eyes.

“ Yes, the Signora is right ; but if I spend money in teaching my son I can have none for myself. Dio ! what can become of me when these ”—she stretched out her brown, capable-looking hands—“ can no longer work for me ? Holy Virgin ! I know not.” She gave another heavy sigh, and again she looked wistfully at me.

I said that if she did her duty by her son he would be sure to take care of her hereafter, but at this her face showed me that we took different views. She shook her head.

“ It ought to be so, Signora,” she said, “ but it is not ; Dio, I have lived in the world many years, and I have not found that men are what they ought to be. No ! not one.—Pardon me, Signore,” she looked deprecatingly towards my companion. “ The Signora has as much money as she wants, and she does not

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hear the truth ; she sees the best side of people, they show the worst to us poor ones."

Poor woman ! I hastened to assure her that I was not in the happy state she fancied. I felt ashamed at giving her my modest fee, and said I wished it could have been larger ; but evidently she was not greedy, she clasped both her brown hands round my arm and squeezed it, while she poured forth effusive thanks. Then she went back to the heap of stones near the entrance of the cave where I had found her, sitting like a hungry spider in wait for an inquiring fly, in the shape of a traveller.

CHAPTER X

THE WAY TO ASSISI



GIORRO.

E had for years desired to make a pilgrimage to Assisi, and now, across the lovely valley the sight of the little white town clinging to Monte Subasio, veiled by grey and purple vapour, was a daily reminder of our wish. Some places stamp themselves into the heart, and while life lasts the longing to revisit them increases, till realisation quenches desire. A visit to such a haunt of delightful memories as Assisi requires time, so we waited till a few days could be spared.

It was very early morning when we drove down from Perugia along the

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Assisi road, a road bordered by the silver and gold of olive-groves and vine-yards. Fragrant, dewy freshness lay on everything ; even when the sun rose higher, and blazed fiercely down on us, we had become so absorbed by the surrounding scenery and its associations that we did not seem to feel the brilliant heat.

Now and then, between the leafy trees on our right, we had glimpses of yellow Tiber on its way to Rome. Francis Bernardone must also have enjoyed these glimpses as he walked to and from Assisi with some favourite disciple, perhaps along this very road.

St. Francis did a far greater work for his contemporaries than any reformer of the later Renaissance period. He did not attack popes and bishops, or find fault with everything and everybody who differed from his special ideas : he used the most powerful means by which to influence mankind,—he lived the life he preached. He had been

THE WAY TO ASSISI

accustomed to luxury and every form of self-pleasing,—he gave up all to follow the way of the Cross, from love to his Saviour. In that brutal and licentious age, the beginning of the thirteenth century, his example seems to have been irresistible. The life of poverty, obedience, and chastity enjoined by his rule sounded utter folly when first proclaimed to the multitude; but it says something in favour of those times that, when the first outcry ceased, and his fellow-citizens witnessed the harmony that existed between his life and his teaching, he was left comparatively unmolested, and his work was not materially interfered with. Though he died at forty-four, he lived long enough to see his Order recognised by Holy Church and by secular potentates, and to know that its widely spread communities were firmly established wherever they had planted themselves.

It may be said of St. Bernard and St. Dominick, that they also practised

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

all they preached, but one feature peculiar to St. Francis is not chronicled of those other revivalists,—his idea of life was a very happy one. In the century that followed, Boccaccio did not teach joy as a duty one whit more strenuously than the Poverello did, although the two men's ideas of the source of joy were so opposite.

One remembers the recorded talk about joy, of that which fails to make, and of that which *is* the true root of happiness, between Francis and Fra Leone,—a talk which continued for two miles, while the master and his disciple walked out from Perugia to Assisi.

At last Fra Leo, called by Francis “the little sheep of God,” cried out: “Father, tell me, I pray thee, wherein can perfect happiness be found?”

Whereupon Francis made his well-known answer, recorded in the eighth chapter of *I Fioretti* (“The Little Flowers of St. Francis”).

THE WAY TO ASSISI

As we drove along we remembered that the hills looking down on us, now varied by exquisite cloud-shadows, had listened to cheerful lays, improvised in the Provençal tongue by Francis as he trudged along this road. He did not have his hymns rendered into Italian verse, so that they might be understood by the people, until he needed them to help his teachings ; his sympathy with human nature taught him the power of music in creating fervent devotion.

Reading the *Fioretti*, one learns that, in spite of the severe rule he followed, Francis enjoyed his life ; there must have been a singular power of fascination in the man, who could always, wherever he went, change sorrow into joy. He rejoiced in the beauty of nature, and went singing along the dusty way, between the olive-trees and the grape-laden vines, which then, as now, probably bordered the road on either hand ; he rejoiced in every trial laid on him, as

PICTURES IN UMBRIA

a fresh offering he could make to his God.

Francis sang till the birds came fluttering round him to share his gladness, mingling their songs with his. At Bevagna, a place south of Spello, he preached his famous sermon to these winged disciples, and bade the swallows cease their disturbing twitter.

He loved all dumb creatures, and strove to care for them, calling them his brothers and sisters; at Gubbio he tamed a wolf, till then the terror of the place. Once, meeting a peasant who had an armful of wild turtle-doves, he took them from the man, lest they should be killed or ill-treated, and, bringing them home to La Portioncula, he caused little nests to be made for the gentle birds, bade them live peacefully, and increase and multiply according to the will of God.

As we drove along the lovely valley, filled now with golden light varied by purple shadow, its glorious background

THE WAY TO ASSISI

of hills in every delicate shade of blue, with spaces between, an opal gauze in the sunshine, and villages nestling beside the tree-shaded Tiber, we saw, hard by, the grey-peaked bridge, so ancient looking, that Francis may one time or another have gone singing across it ; and we felt that such a mind could not have lived amid so much beauty without becoming interpenetrated by it.

He is so entirely incorporated with Assisi and its surroundings, that one cannot describe the old town without now and again referring to the time-worn tale, so beautifully told by Monsieur Paul Sabatier.

Our two hours' drive between vines and olive-trees backed by grand purple hills had been lovely. The grapes were almost ripe, pale gold in colour, thickly hanging from tender green garlands, which stretched from one tree to another and linked them together. In some fields long-horned oxen were ploughing the stiff lumpy land between the vines ;

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here and there golden stalks of maize lay on the rich brown soil. The sun-touched summits of Subasio and his brethren looked like radiant clouds ; the pure invigorating air was delightful.

As one nears Assisi, the two salient points in the view are, on the left, high up the mountain side, the great convent



CONVENT AND CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO.

of San Francesco, with its double churches ; on the right, at the foot of the ascent to the town, is seen the dome of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

The body of this church was built in the sixteenth century over the original chapel, the Portioncula, in which St. Francis and his disciples worshipped,

THE WAY TO ASSISI

and in which Santa Chiara and so many others took the vows of the Order, and devoted themselves to lead lives of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Huge Subasio had been in front of us all the way, but we could now distinguish clearly the long stretch of white houses clinging midway to the side of the mountain; and above the houses, the campaniles and spires of Assisi, while towering high over the road, supported by a double row of lofty arches, are the convent, and the two churches of San Francesco.

In a picture it would be difficult to give an adequate idea of the approach to Assisi,—certainly word-painting cannot describe it. Probably the thrill caused by the associations and surroundings of the town intensifies the charm.

The varied colour of the hills on either side of us had become more exquisite. Now we had in full view the scene described by Dante as the

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birthplace of San Francesco, for the town seems a part of the

“ Rich slope of mountain high, whence heat and cold

Are wafted through Perugia’s eastern gate,
Upon that side where it doth break its steep-
ness most, arose

A sun upon the world”—

Cary’s Translation of *Il Paradiso*.

For miles round, this building of San Francesco makes a striking landmark, and as long as it stands it bears witness to the strange and beautiful story of the youth who gave up all that seemed to make life worth living, to save not only his own soul, but those of others.

There was no tardy justice in the recognition given to his holy life, and the benefits worked by his discipline. In 1228, two years after his death, Francesco Bernardone was canonised by Pope Gregory ix.—the tried friend who knew the life as well as the work of El Poverello—as St. Francis of Assisi was called, and the building of the Lower Church was begun.

THE WAY TO ASSISI

Before the century ended this church and the upper one had become a great centre of art-workers; in a sense, we may look on Francis of Assisi as a source of inspiration to both Giotto and Dante; they were all three originators and purifiers.

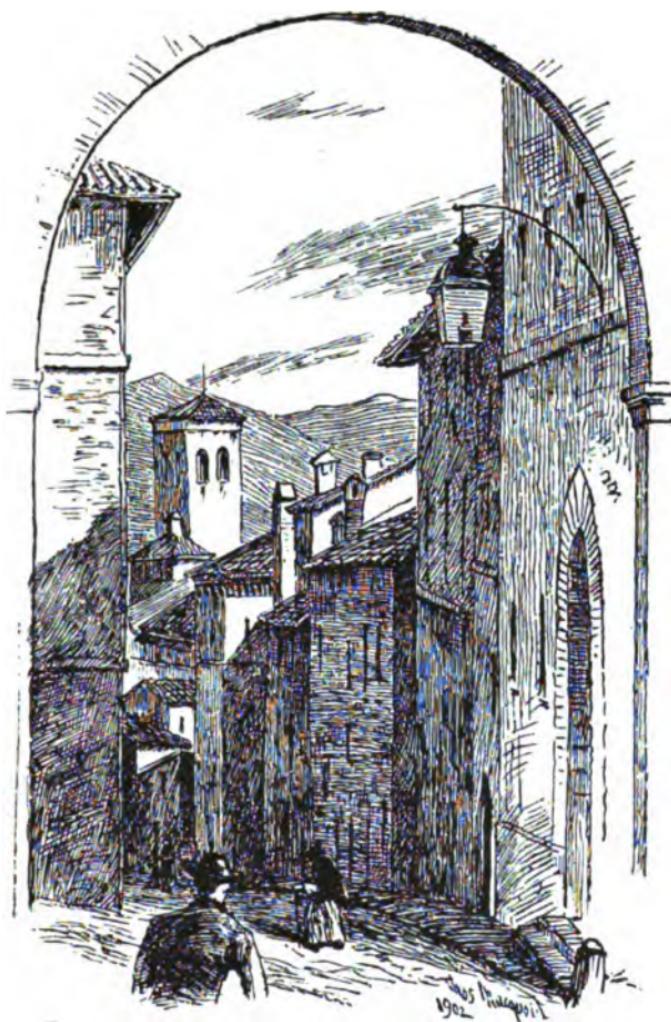
Dante's description in the *Paradiso*, or rather the story which he makes St. Thomas Aquinas relate concerning Saint Francis, shows that a lapse of centuries has not in any way altered the high esteem in which he was held less than a century after his death. Dante was born only thirty-nine years later; and as he certainly visited Assisi, he must have been well acquainted with all the details of the saint's history. It may have been in his exultation at the triumphs achieved by his friend Giotto's frescoes at Assisi that the poet writes, after mentioning Cimabue, "And now the cry is Giotto's."

Our driver stopped at the foot of the hill, and told us we had better

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begin our pilgrimage at the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli. We had, however, planned to begin the wonderful story at its first chapter, and to visit the saint's birthplace, also the scene of his final renunciation of the world. So we bade honest Checco drive us on to the Hotel Subasio beside the hill, where we dismissed our carriage, and looked at the room allotted to us.

We then climbed the bit of ascent, and feasted our eyes on the outside of the churches of San Francesco.



ENTRANCE TO THE TOWN, ASSISI.

M

CHAPTER XI

ASSISI—SAN FRANCESCO



STATUE OF
ST. FRANCIS.

AS we mounted the hill the great shrine had seemed to rise higher and higher above us ; in the flaming sunshine the olives looked a pale silver against the deep blue sky. When at last we took the way to the monastery, we seemed to have reached a deserted town. Assisi was still and lifeless ; the very inn was asleep. Flies and gnats, however, made us sharply feel that the heat gave them extra thirst, and that we were a boon in this absence of human life.

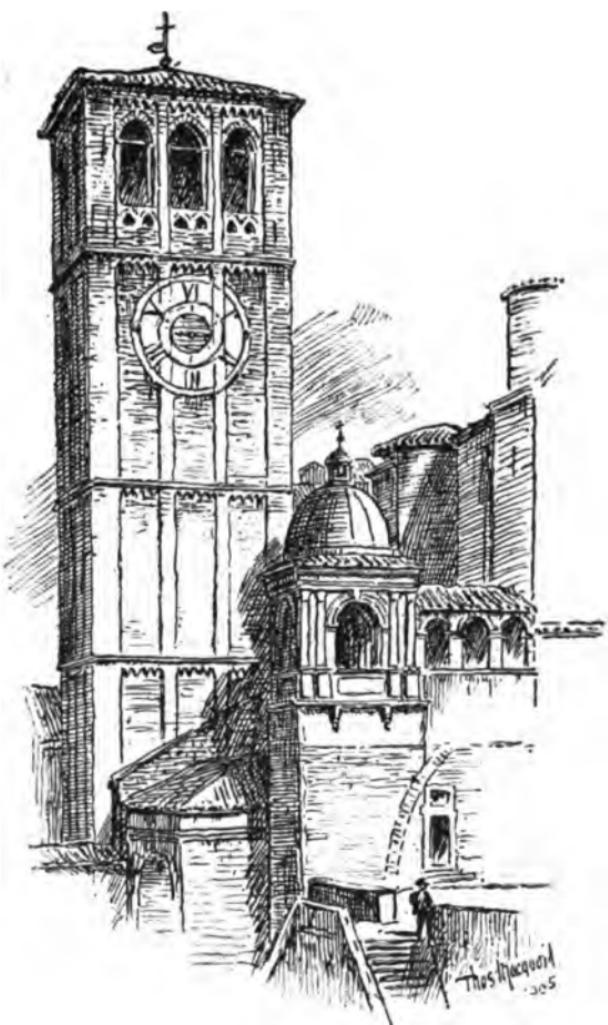
We had been told that the Lower

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Church of the monastery is best seen in morning light, so, instead of beginning our pilgrimage with the first chapter of the saint's story, in Chiesa Nuova, at the top of the town, we turned to the cloister of San Francesco, and passed along it to the terrace, on to which the beautiful porch opens.

To-day this porch was full of exquisite effects of light and shadow ; near it is Fra Filippo's massive and finely proportioned campanile. The name of the architect of the church is unknown ; but it seems fairly attested that the campanile was built by Fra Filippo Campello, who later on became the architect of the church erected by the Assisians, on the site of San Giorgio, in honour of Santa Chiara, or Clara, the first female convert of St. Francis, the foundress of the "Poor Clares."

It is strange that the name of the great architect who designed this beautiful church and monastery should be doubtful, especially as San Francesco is



THE TOWER, SAN FRANCESCO.

ASSISI—SAN FRANCESCO

said to be almost the first Gothic church built in Italy, and remains to this day one of the purest and most beautiful in style, free from that admixture of Renaissance work which robs so many Italian churches of the reverence and religious inspiration created by our English and so many French cathedrals. At San Francesco the very walls are sermons in stone ; while, especially in the Lower Church, the rich beauty of colour calls out a perpetual hymn of praise.

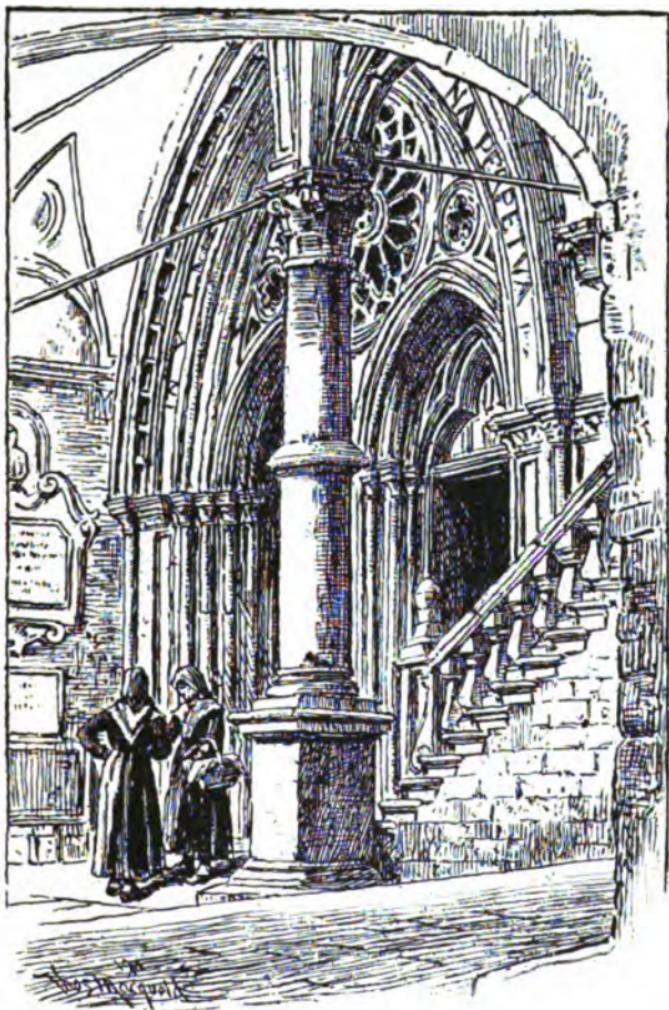
The offerings made by pilgrims from all parts of Italy at the tomb of Francis in San Giorgio had, in the space of two years, amounted to a sum large enough to defray the expense of building this Lower Church.

We went in by the porch to the atrium ; coming from the brilliant sunshine outside, all seemed so dim that we feared we should not make out the frescoes that cover, with mellow, delicious colour, the walls and low vaults of nave and side chapels.

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One seems to breathe colour in the atmosphere of this Lower Church; the very air is painted, as light comes in through the stained glass windows, most of which are worth a careful study. There are interesting tombs in this first part of the church, before one enters the nave; one of the tombs resembles in its arrangement Giovanni Pisano's beautiful monument to Pope Benedict XI. at San Domenico, Perugia, but the Assisan tomb is wholly inferior in execution. As we stood looking up the nave, we realised how truly this church embodies the life and work of Francis Bernardone; it is a house of prayer and praise. Its exquisite beauty, both of architecture and colour, inspires the joy so continually preached by Francis, in which he lived, despite his ascetic privations and self-denying labour for the good of souls.

It is impossible to describe, or even to name, except generally, the numberless frescoes which enrich the walls and



ENTRANCE DOOR TO LOWER CHURCH, ASSISI.

ASSISI—SAN FRANCESCO

the vaultings of the transepts and chapels ; the golden-starred, blue roof of the nave absorbs the light, but it adds to the mysterious beauty of the church.

Perhaps the first thing that one admires on entering the nave is the richly-coloured cross-vaulting above the high altar, and that between the choir and transepts. There are four chapels on the right, and only two on the left side of the nave ; between these two are the sacristies. There can be no doubt that in the original plan these chapels did not exist.

The foundation of the church was laid in 1228 ; evidently the walls when completed were covered with frescoes by some very early painters, who failed to satisfy the taste of the Franciscans ; for one can make out portions of old fresco work near the entrances to the chapels, the wall here having been removed when these additions were made to the original building.

This took place before Cimabue and

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Giunta Pisano and then Giotto and his pupils came from Florence ; followed by the Lorenzetti and Simone Martino, from Siena, to make the basilica the burnished jewel it is to-day. A harmony of blue and scarlet, of green and gold, fills one's sight as one looks onward to the high altar.

We went up to the right transept ; here is the famous Madonna of Cimabue. Above the arch of the chapel within the transept is a beautiful fresco by Giotto, of the Annunciation, part of a series by that painter of the Infant Life of our Lord, from the Annunciation to the Finding the Holy Child in the Temple ; the figures in these frescoes all tell their own story, and are full of beauty and dignity. The Annunciation over the arch leading to the chapel is especially lovely.

There is also another series of Giotto frescoes on the wall of this transept ; in one a child is falling from a window ; there are sweet faces among the women

ASSISI—SAN FRANCESCO

who kneel in front. St. Francis meets the child as its body is being taken to burial, and restores it to life. The other two frescoes also deal with restoration to life. Our guide said that one of the faces in these was a likeness of Giotto Bondone. In this Lower Church are many frescoes by Giotto's pupils, notably by Taddeo Gaddi and by Giottino, who have done very fine work on its walls. Within the chapel, beyond the Annunciation, is an interesting series of frescoes, which represent the story of St. Nicholas; these are said to be the work of Giotto's best pupil, name unknown, some of whose work is also in the Upper Church. The truth to nature in the conception, and the simplicity of this master's work, make the study of it most fascinating; its breadth of treatment gives it a peace and dignity which the solemn stiffness of Cimabue fails to inspire.

Giotto must have been young when the Franciscans summoned him to

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adorn the walls of their basilica, for his work there is supposed to have been completed in the early years of the fourteenth century, and he was not born till 1265.

It is well known how the great artist Cimabue, on his way from Vespignano, a village some miles north of Florence, found among the hills a shepherd lad of ten years old, named Giotto Bondone, sketching on a bit of stone, and how the great Florentine was, on close inspection of the sketch, so impressed by the truth to nature shown in the boy's likeness of one of his sheep, that he thenceforth adopted Giotto as his pupil, and took him to Florence, where for ten years the youth worked in Cimabue's atelier.

It is strange that the painter should have so greatly admired the simple love for and the truthful rendering of nature which characterises his protégé's work, for Cimabue himself clung to the stiff drawing and unlovely ideals of

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Byzantine art, overlaid with gold and jewels. The most striking feature in Giotto's work is the life-likeness of his figures and faces and their surroundings ; and the natural and simple way in which he portrays action. The faces are seldom as lovely as those of the Sienese painters in this church, but there is no exaggeration about Giotto. Ruskin says " his imagination was exhaustive without extravagance."

At Assisi one seems to trace his progress from these early paintings in the right transept, to the very excellent series on the Life of St. Francis in the Upper Church. Time has probably lent its mellowing help, but the rich yet soft harmony of colour is beyond the power of word-painting,—it takes complete possession of the gazer.

The left-hand transept contains the chapel of San Giovanni. The Franciscans confided its adornment to Pietro Lorenzetti of Siena, who covered the walls with scenes from the Passion.

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The colour is rich and remarkable, but the design is frequently exaggerated. In the fresco of the Crucifixion, however, the figures beneath the cross are beautiful, especially those of the Madonna, of St. John the Evangelist, and St. Francis.

Another very interesting chapel, also on left side of nave below the grille, which at great functions is closed, dividing the nave from the transept and the high altar, is that dedicated to St. Martin, filled with lovely frescoes by Simone Martini of Siena, representing the life and miracles of Martin of Tours. The faces and figures are delightful, so is the colour; the story of the saint is admirably told.

There are also beautiful frescoes by Simone Martini, or Simone Memmi, as this Sienese painter is often called, between the entrances to the chapels of the Sacrament and that of St. Mary Magdalene. Many others by Giotto and his pupils are in the various chapels.

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When we had looked at some of these, we went back to the high altar, and, standing there, beneath that glorious vaulting overhead, we found it difficult to realise that we were actually on the place so filled with memories of the three great revivalists of purity, for in their respective generations Francis Bernardone, Dante, and Giotto strove to regenerate Italy.

After a while, as one stands gazing at the great lunettes overhead, one can picture the two friends, Dante and Giotto, on the space now occupied by the high altar,—the imagination of the poet aiding the skill of the painter to perpetuate the teaching of the Spouse of Poverty.

The tomb of St. Francis is in an open crypt below the high altar ; this crypt is called by the Assisians the Third Church ; the neighbouring peasants frequently attend the early mass celebrated here.

Owing to the care with which Brother Elias, who succeeded Francis as Vicar-

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general of the Order, secreted the urn containing the remains of the saint, they were not discovered till the year 1818. A tradition had been circulated, and was firmly believed in, that a third very beautiful church had been built underground, and contained the body of the founder.

This successor of Francis, Fra Elia, was doubtless proud and ambitious ; his grasping worldliness and irreligion greatly injured the repute of the Franciscan community, but in this special case he acted wisely. Perugia had determined to possess herself of the precious body, which drew pilgrims from all parts of Europe to make offerings at its shrine ; Elias knew this, and therefore, when the basilica was completed, and the saint's remains were removed from their tomb at San Giorgio to the new church, he buried them secretly, and surrounded them by a strongly cemented underground wall of masonry, which effectually baffled

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all attempts to discover them, though the Perugians made several attacks on Assisi for that sole purpose.

In 1818 the Assisians made a more skilful and sustained excavation. At the end of two months, spent in piercing the rock on which the church is built, and the solid wall of masonry which seemed part of the rock itself, the urn was discovered. The excuse for Elias is that he considered the presence of the saint's body to be the honour and glory of the city of Assisi, to say nothing of the wealth accumulated by offerings at the shrine.

Overhead is the culminating glory of the church, the frescoes on the four central lunettes of the vault, sometimes considered to be Giotto's finest work at Assisi. They represent, in allegory, the poverty, the obedience, and the chastity enjoined by the saint, and embodied by him in the rule of his Order. The fourth spandrel represents St. Francis in Glory.

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Probably the poet and the painter stood together on this very spot. Tradition says that Dante aided his friend in the conception of these grand designs. The marriage of Francis to the Lady Poverty seems to prefigure the lines in the *Paradiso*, for Giotto had finished his work at Assisi before those lines were written.

In the next compartment, a monk, a nun, and a lay-brother of the Order are seen taking the vow of chastity ; they are supposed to represent Bernard di Quintavalle, the wealthy noble who became the first disciple of St. Francis ; Santa Chiara, who wears the robe of the Second Franciscan Order ; the lay-brother, in a Florentine garb, is thought to be Dante. The Virtue, guarded by angels, looks out from a tower above. There are many other figures, mortals, angels, and demons, who indicate in various ways the constant struggle and mortification attendant on the Franciscan calling. Some of the angels with beautiful faces

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are busily engaged repelling the spirits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, who strive to tempt the neophyte, a naked youth who is being baptized by two angels in a font in middle distance. The good angels hurl the devils over the rocks into depths far below.

The third fresco, Obedience, is also full of allegorical figures, and the Virtue wears the Franciscan robe. The fourth fresco shows St. Francis in Glory, surrounded by throngs of fair-haired angels, who sing hymns of perpetual praise. The truth to nature in these figures is remarkable, some of the faces are beautiful.

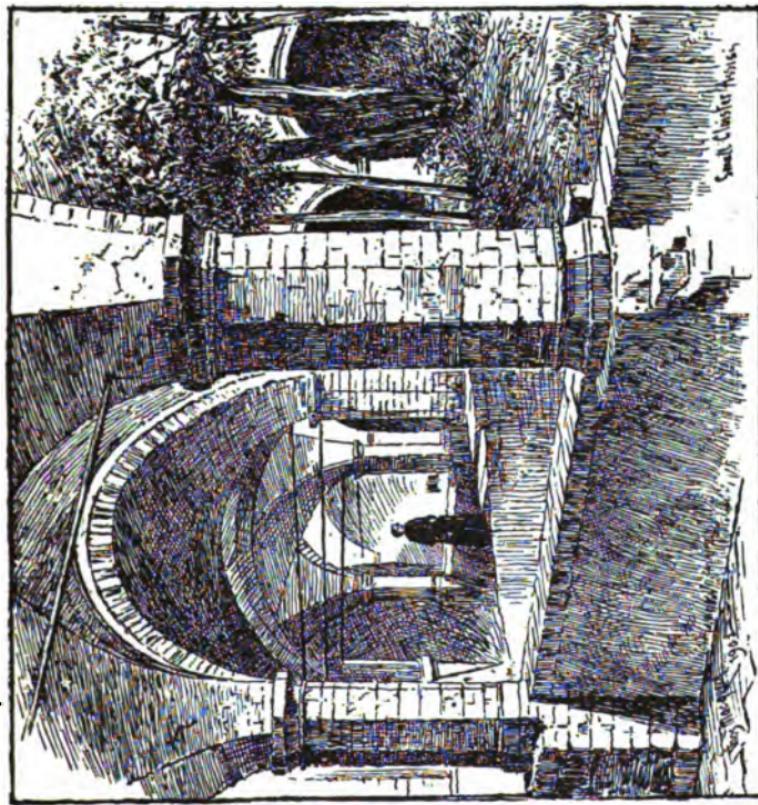
One might fill many pages with detailed descriptions of the frescoes on the walls and vaulting of this gemlike church. It takes several days even to see them, and therefore it is wiser to spend some time in Assisi, so as to examine them in their best light.

So wonderfully picturesque is every part of this Lower Church, that it is very

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difficult to give any idea of such a storehouse of early Italian art, for both Upper and Lower Churches seem to have been a rallying-ground for Giotto and his pupils, for the early Sienese masters, and for others following after Cimabue, Giunta Pisano, and the very early painters of Italy.

Fra Antonio, the sacristan, was a most kind and intelligent guide : pointing out to us the portrait of Francis, attributed to Giunta da Pisano, he took us into the sacristy, and let us see strips of old embroidery mounted on frames. The faces in this embroidery were beautifully rendered, and the colour was delightful. The Fra told us that some English ladies from Perugia had so greatly admired the old lace in the vestiary that he felt sure we should also like to see it ; among it was some very fine point de Venise, used to trim surplices. I forget how old he said it was ; some of the vestments were exquisitely embroidered.



THE SMALL CLOISTER, SAN FRANCESCO.

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Then he opened a door, and we saw the quaintest little cloister, surrounded by the grey convent walls ; the garden, in its grass-grown quadrangle, was seemingly left to itself. We spied out rosy cyclamen blossoms dotted among the grassed hollows of the rough ground, and our kind Fra, tucking up the skirts of his cassock, for at San Francesco the Franciscan habit is not worn, the conventional garb takes its place, stepped into the quad, and gathered a bunch of blossoms, which he presented to me, with tufts of maidenhair fern from the low wall of the cloistered garden. He asked my companions to come and dig up roots of both cyclamen and maidenhair.

“The Signori may as well have them,” he said, with a sigh, “as those who set no store by them.”

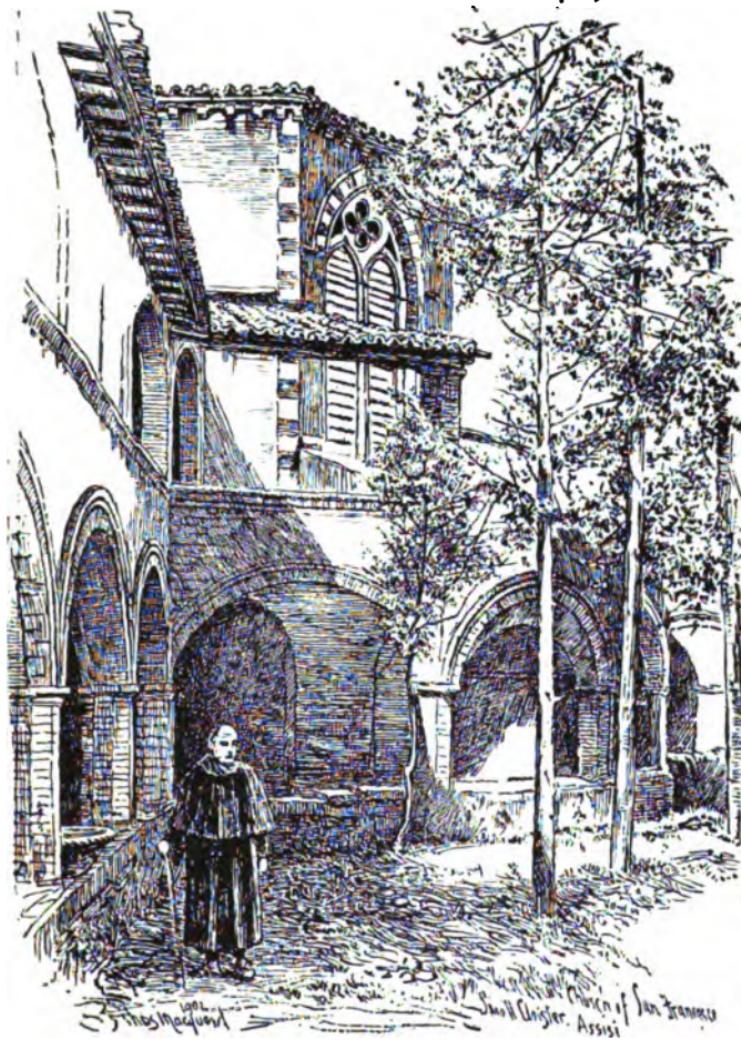
He was very kind, but we wondered what St. Francis would have thought about the change of costume and the

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comparative comfort of these guardians of his burial-place.

We went back into the basilica, and up a staircase which led to the east end of the Upper Church, built some twenty-one years after the Lower one. It is a beautiful and graceful example of early Gothic. The Pope's chair, near which we entered, is in red marble; the high altar at that time was surrounded by a screen, mass being no longer said there.

Cimabue and other old painters have covered the walls in this part of the Upper Church with frescoes, many of them grand and impressive in design, though they have greatly suffered from so-called restoration by unskilful hands, while damp has damaged others. Some of the subjects are from the Old Testament, others from events in the life of our Lord; the general effect is, however, rich and harmonious. The long series taken from the life of St. Francis, along the lower part of the nave, is



CLOISTER-GARDEN, SAN FRANCESCO.

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very interesting. There are twenty-eight subjects, chiefly painted by Giotto ; the rest are said to be executed by that pupil of the Florentine master who painted the legend of St. Nicholas in the Lower Church. Giotto's fine series in this Upper Church portrays the saint's history, and contains, I believe, the best work executed by the artist in the basilica ; it is much later in date than some of his other Franciscan frescoes. The painter is said to have taken as his guide Father Bonaventura's Life of St. Francis. As this writer was born during the lifetime of Francis, and was later on commissioned to write the saint's Life, his narrative may be considered reliable. The painting of the various scenes is masterly, and the detail in the interesting events here depicted, the architecture especially, is rendered in a very striking manner.

These frescoes are so lifelike, that they stamp yet more strongly into the mind the impression created by a visit

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to Assisi, the truth of the wonderful conversion and subsequent life of Francesco Bernardone.

One of the most striking incidents in this conversion is illustrated in the fourth fresco of the series, in which the saint is shown praying before the crucifix in San Damiano. Those who have read the beautiful *Vie de Saint François d'Assise*, by Monsieur Paul Sabatier, will understand the meaning of this fresco, though it has been so sadly injured by damp. For those who have not enjoyed this privilege a short sketch of the saint's life is here added.

Francis Bernardone was born at Assisi in 1182, his father being a rich merchant called Pietro Bernardone. His mother, Madonna Pica, is said to have been better born than her wealthy husband, who travelled, according to the custom of the time, from one city and castle to another, journeying sometimes as far as France, with his company, and

ASSISI—SAN FRANCESCO

the goods he had to sell. He does not seem to have taken Francis with him ; he preferred that the youth should remain at home, and use his singular power of making friends among the wild and dissolute young nobles of Assisi.

Now and again Pietro would ask for his son's help in his warehouse, but this was seldom. He wished the young fellow to distinguish himself among these prodigals, and therefore gave him liberal means, so that he might join in all their sports and amusements, in their banquets and night revelries.

The whole world of this period seems to have abandoned itself to every form of sin and pleasure. There was no discipline, no self-restraint to be found ; might meant right. Self was everywhere worshipped, especially among the nobles and the wealthy.

Francis and his companions did not lack bravery. They joined the Assisan troops in resisting an attack made by

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the rival and far more powerful city of Perugia ; the Assisans were defeated, and Francis, with some of his friends, was for months imprisoned in a Perugian dungeon. This gave him leisure for reflection.

Soon after being liberated, he fell ill of a fever, and could not return to his former life. He had already begun to see it with new eyes, and during his slow recovery fell into a strange melancholy ; rousing from this, he decided to lead a military life. He would, he told himself, perform daring feats of valour ; so, when a very distinguished knight asked him to take service with the Pope's troops, then warring in Apulia, Francis eagerly accepted the proposal.

The night before the two friends started, Francis dreamed that he saw his father's warehouse, usually stored with bales of silk, and gold and silver stuffs, filled with lances and military accoutrements both for men and horses. He awoke in great delight. He con-

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sidered this dream a good omen for the success of his expedition, and rode joyfully next day to Spoleto. A version of this dream is given on fresco No. 2, by Giotto, in the Upper Church. At Spoleto his fever returned, and he heard a voice telling him he had completely mistaken the meaning of his dream, and that he must at once return to his father's house. Francis obeyed, but on his return his father and his fellow-citizens were disgusted by his apparent cowardice in turning back.

Francis had always been charitable to the poor, flinging liberal largesses to them as he rode about the country, sumptuously dressed and with his horse richly caparisoned; he now awoke to the conviction that the poor and suffering were his fellow-creatures, and merited a more personal and tender treatment than he had bestowed on them. Hitherto he had so dearly loved his gay companions; that he grudged every moment spent away

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from them ; he even hurried over meals with his father and mother, so that he might the more speedily rejoin his frivolous friends. Now, after his return from Spoleto, he often went to a grotto, in a wood near Assisi, and prayed there ; he saw less and less of his companions, he even sold some of his rich clothing that he might have more to give to the poor. In his father's absence he would clear the table of all food left on it, and give it among his poor friends. He had always been extremely dainty and fastidious in his habits and tastes, and he especially shrank from contact with any of the numerous lepers who, since the return of the Crusaders, had become a plague along the high-roads of Europe. One day he met a leper, and, after giving him an alms, turned abruptly away ; on reflection, this seemed to him cruel and uncharitable. Soon afterwards he paid a visit to the lazarus-house, spoke kindly to the inmates, and gave each leper

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a special alms, kissing their hands as he did so. More than once, when he met a poor man and had not a coin with him, he would bestow an article of his own clothing on the beggar.

His gay friends became greatly troubled at his changed behaviour. They dearly loved his sweet, fearless nature, and his winning charm of manner. They could not spare him from among them, for they looked on him as their leader.

They reproached him with his absence, and implored him to return to them. Francis announced that he was going to give them a banquet, and did so ; there was every possible luxury, the table was magnificently decked, and he was chosen lord of the feast. But though he was cheerful, he was quieter, less full of wild revelry than he had formerly been, and when they all left the feast, instead of leading his companions into the streets of Assisi, as he had formerly done, he lingered

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behind, till they had to retrace their steps so as to join him.

They asked what ailed him ;—was he thinking of marriage ?

He remained silent awhile, then he said :

“ You have guessed rightly : I intend to espouse that most beautiful of brides, the Lady Poverty. No longer will I waste my time and dissipate my substance on follies.”

They stared in disbelief, then they treated it as a jest, but when they found he was in earnest, they jeered at their idolised leader.

When Pietro Bernardone learned that Francis had broken with his former associates, he became furious. Already greatly angered by the report of his son’s visits to the lazarus-house, and by other instances of the young fellow’s charity, he could not pardon this public act of folly.

So long as his son shared the pursuits of the dissolute nobles who had

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so greatly admired him, so long as he was to be found in their company, the arrogant, purse-proud merchant, keenly desirous to better, as he considered, his son's position in the world, had been lavish of his money to the spendthrift; though even in those wild days instances are recorded of the younger Bernardone's goodness to the poor and suffering.

He therefore sent for Francis.

" You are welcome," he said, " to spend my money as you please, even to the half of it, provided you spend it in the company of noble lords, so as to bring you, in return, praise and honour. I covet for you distinction, and you well know that it can only be gained from the world; not one soldo will I give you to bestow on vile lepers, or on churches and priests. You are idle, I hear; you spend all your time in praying."

This tyranny greatly troubled Francis, though it seems to have helped his

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inward convictions by turning him more and more from the temptations to worldliness.

From this time forth the young fellow's domestic life became a daily martyrdom, except when his father was absent for weeks together in pursuit of business. But on Pietro's return he always began to persecute his son. This, joined to the mental suffering endured by Francis in his struggle after truth, had greatly affected the young convert's health.

Outside the Porta Nuova, in the midst of a wood, was the little ruined church of San Damiano, served by one poor priest, who dwelt in a miserable hermitage beside it. Francis had made acquaintance with this priest, who, on his side, was hospitable to the friendless youth, for not only his former companions, but the Assisan citizens sided with his father in condemning Francis's behaviour. Frequently the younger Bernardone would spend all

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night on his knees in the old church of San Damiano.

He was one day kneeling here in prayer when he heard a voice calling him. He listened, and heard it distinctly bid him seek a closer walk with God ; it told him henceforth to devote himself to the restoration of God's ruined houses in Umbria. At that time, owing partly to the continual warfare and brigandage under which the country groaned ; also to the frequent visitations of the plague, which carried off so many monks who tended the stricken hospital patients, some religious houses were almost bereft of their inmates, very few monks were left to repair and keep in order the churches and chapels of Umbria, and many of these were therefore sadly dilapidated.

Francis felt transported out of himself, his doubts and difficulties seemed to vanish before this direct call from heaven. In his religious fervour he resolved to quit his father's house,

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now a scene of daily persecution. He would in future devote himself to the building up of ruined shrines, and he would begin with the chapel of San Damiano. In a fresco by Giotto in the Upper Church, Francis is seen kneeling before the crucifix listening to the voice. The crucifix still exists, but it has been removed from San Damiano to Santa Chiara. A part of this fresco is almost obliterated by damp. Perhaps the most interesting fresco of the series is that in which Francis renounces the world before the bishop and the people of Assisi.

After he had vowed at San Damiano to devote himself to the reparation of ruined churches and shrines, he remembered that he had no money wherewith to begin his labours. The remarkable gift he possessed, decision of character, now impelled him to put his resolve into instant action.

He hastened back to Assisi, made into a bundle some rich stuffs, his own property (not, as has been said,

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goods belonging to his father), then, bent on speedily repairing the fabric of San Damiano, Francis rode off along the valley, to the thriving commercial town of Foligno, only a few miles away. In the market of Foligno he sold all he possessed, even the horse he rode, with its trappings, and joyfully returned on foot to San Damiano, with a bag full of money.

The arrogance and avarice of Pietro Bernardone were known throughout the country-side, his quarrels, too, with his son's new ideas were by this time public property ; so that, when Francis toiled joyfully up the hill to the chapel, and offered his bag of money to the priest, the good man refused to accept it, warning the young enthusiast that such a gift would greatly anger the rich merchant, his father. At this refusal Francis flung his purse into the window nook of the chapel, and, turning to the priest, begged him to feed and lodge him in his humble dwelling.

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Pietro was at home, and after a while became anxious at his son's continued absence; he went to look for him at San Damiano. Francis, however, guessing at his father's anger, had already found a safe hiding-place in the wood. When he heard Pietro's fierce reproaches, he trembled; he then termed himself a coward to prove thus unworthy of the call he had received.

He resolved to go back to Assisi, and announce to his father his choice of a vocation. His long mental struggle, his nights spent in prayer and fasting, his weeks of severe discipline, had greatly changed his appearance; his clothing was soiled and torn, his face pale and emaciated. When he trudged into Assisi, the town children failed to recognise him, and, excited by the sight of this strange beggar, they surrounded him, crying out, "A madman, a madman!" throwing stones at him.

The outcry called his father to his house door; he saw and recognised his

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son. The furious merchant seized Francis by the collar, dragged him into the house, which stood on the site of Chiesa Nuova, and, after a severe flogging, flung him into a cellar. Here the young ascetic was rigorously imprisoned till Pietro again left home for one of his business journeys.

He had no sooner gone than Madonna Pica released and tried to comfort the son she so dearly loved. Francis soon bade her adieu, and returned to San Damiano.

But when Pietro came home again, and found his son absent, it is said that he gave his wife a beating before he hurried off to the ruined chapel in the wood.

This time Francis did not try to hide himself ; but when his father, in a torrent of reproaches, told him he must quit the country, because he had brought such disgrace on his family, the young fellow respectfully answered :

“ Henceforth God is my only Father ; I cannot obey any other.”

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Pietro again broke into furious accusation. He had lavished a fortune on Francis, he said, and this was the return he got for it.

For answer, his son pointed to the bag of money which still lay in the window nook.

Bernardone eagerly seized it. He swore that he would appeal to the justice of the law to punish his son.

He did appeal. Francis was cited to appear before the magistrate. He refused to obey the summons ; he had put himself, he said, under the protection of the Church.

When Bernardone heard of this answer he appealed to the Ecclesiastical Court ; but the Bishop's answer to the angry father was a warning. He said that if Pietro really wished to punish his son for being good and pious, his only resource was to persuade Francis to give up all claim to his patrimony, or he could, if he chose, disinherit him.

Francis was summoned to the Bishop's

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palace, on the Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore. He found the place thronged by the excited citizens of Assisi. The Bishop, at that time well disposed towards the young fellow, advised him to end the quarrel with his father by renouncing all claim to his inheritance.

When Francis heard this counsel, his face beamed with joy. He stripped off his clothing, rolled it into a bundle, and laid it and the few coins he still possessed at the feet of the Bishop. He then turned to the wonder-struck citizens of Assisi :

“Mark all of you,” he said, “I have given back my possessions to Pietro Bernardone ; I once called him father, hereafter I address myself altogether to our Father which is in Heaven.”

Pietro pushed forward ; he snatched up the money and the clothing.

This drew a loud murmur from the Assisians, for the rich merchant’s arrogance and avarice had alienated his

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fellow-townsmen ; he had grown to be unpopular.

The compassionate Bishop at once flung his own cloak over the youth's shivering shoulders ; his charity drew forth a pitying chorus of approval. The people, who had hitherto despised Francis as a fool, saw him suddenly in a new light ; they marvelled at this singular proof of self-abnegation.

Thus the first-fruits of his mission were reaped from the impression created in many of these bystanders, who during the past two years had scornfully witnessed and mocked at his good deeds and his devout life.

The reality of the scene represented in this fresco is marvellous ; it at once tells its own story. The compassionate Bishop puts his cloak round the naked youth, who holds up his hands in the act of renunciation, while the stern-looking Pietro bustles forward to snatch at the money and clothing, and also apparently to strike a blow at his son, but is held

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back by a wealthy-looking fellow-citizen in an ermine-lined cloak and tippet.

In another fresco Francis is preaching to the birds at Bevagna; in another we see the arid summit of La Vernia above the Casentino valley, where, in his later years, he is said to have received the Stigmata. Another fresco full of beauty and interest is called “The Mourning of the Nuns of San Damiano.” It shows how, after the saint’s death, his body was carried past the convent of San Damiano, on its way to sepulture at San Giorgio; the saintly Clara had been for some years Abbess of the little convent in the wood, and she and the Poor Clares, her Sisters, wept over the body of their beloved founder.

These frescoes, and the thoughts they recall, are deeply interesting, and yet the Upper Church is not so delightful as the Lower one is,—at least, we did not find it so fascinating, although, in addition to the frescoes, the painted windows are full of beauty; there is

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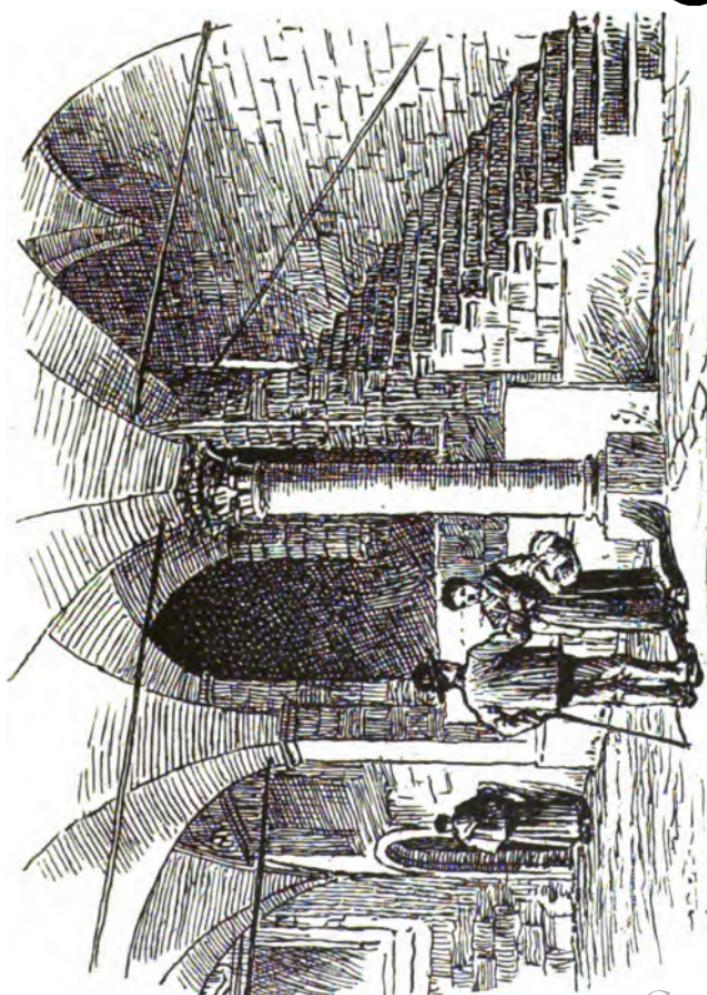
rather too much light ; one misses the rich mellowness of atmosphere which fills the Lower Church with a dim mystery of splendid colour, especially one misses the work of the Sienese painters.

The way to La Vernia, judging by the fresco, must have been terribly rugged. The favourite resort of St. Francis, when he retired from the distractions of life at La Portioncula, to give himself more fully to prayer and contemplation, was Le Carceri ; the cells are still to be seen in a ravine on the side of rugged Monte Subasio, some way north of San Damiano. Le Carceri is a series of caves in the solid rock, containing the monks' cells ; it is backed by a wood, and has the hill torrent before it. The walk there from Assisi is full of beauty, and it is not a very long way from Piazza Nuova, leaving Assisi by Porta Cappucini. Here the saint had frequent talk with the birds in the woods near Le Carceri ; the ilex

OUTSIDE
SAN FRANCESCO

— San Francesco

Antonio Molinari 1910



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tree is still shown on which the winged disciples perched while Saint Francis talked with them.

It was at Le Carceri that he invited the nightingale to try which could sing longest to the praise and glory of God. Brother Leo declined to join in this trial, but the saint and the nightingale sang on through the night, till Francis, completely exhausted, had to yield victory to the bird.

While we stood gazing at the frescoes, thinking of all these things, Fra Antonio said softly :

“ The Signora and the Signori have now seen all I can to-day show them.”

We longed to linger, but already the kind man had given us much of his time ; he quaintly added, “ It is, moreover, my dinner-hour.”

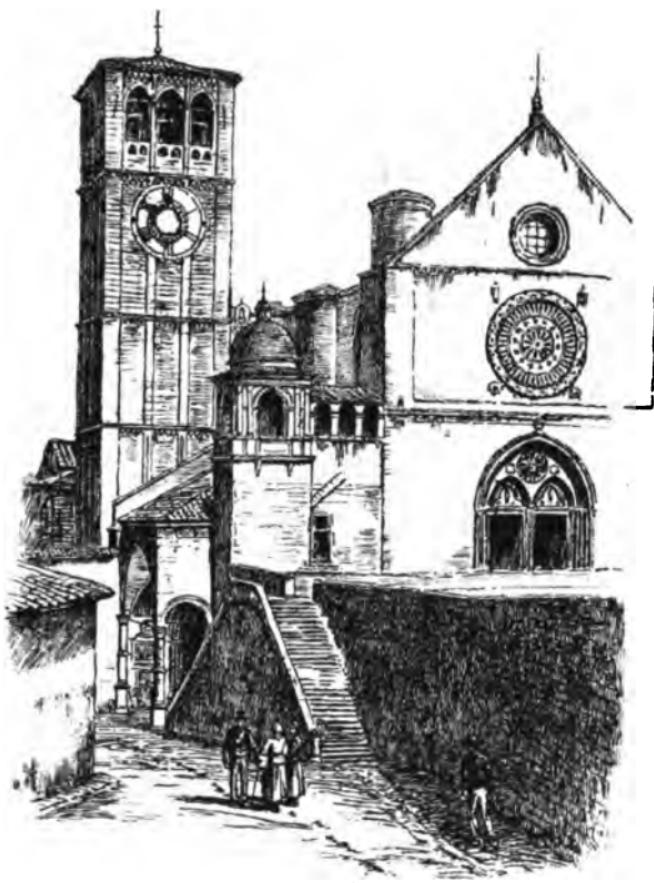
Then we took leave of the kind Fra, and said we would come again. We went out by the west door under the fine window, and rejoiced in the very lovely view before us. We wished

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our guide a good appetite, and he stood watching us as we went down one flight of the double range of steps leading from the Piazza of the Upper Church to the Lower one.

We were tired when we came out into the sunshine, and we sat down in the shade opposite a fountain, at the foot of the steps.

A girl came presently up the hill behind us, her bare feet white with dust. She carried on her red-kerchiefed head a tall copper pitcher with dinges which bespoke it the worse for wear ; her skirt was short and dark, and the light blue bodice laced up behind showed a white undervest. In a minute she began to run fast, deftly balancing the tall pitcher. Then we saw behind her a long-legged lad, evidently bent on arriving first at the fountain. The two figures seemed to fly along the dusty road ; the lad outran the girl, and, when she reached him, panting and choking with laughter,



SAN FRANCESCO, THE UPPER CHURCH.

ASSISI—SAN FRANCESCO

he had the courtesy to fill her pitcher for her, and helped her in raising it to her head.

It is wonderful how these women can so surely support the loads they carry on their heads ; the burden is sometimes a huge round basket, three feet across, full of grapes or heavy vegetables.

We rarely saw a man thus burdened ; he seems to content himself in Italy, as he does in France, with looking on and admiring, while the women do the work.

CHAPTER XII

ASSISI—IN THE TOWN

OUR little hotel, the Albergo Subasio, is close to San Francesco, and from its windows commands a most exquisite view of the valley and the richly-tinted hills. If time served, one could spend hours in enjoying the beauty of this landscape, so full of colour and of variety.

We passed by San Francesco, and up the long, solemn street which it seems to guard. Grass grows freely between the stones that pave the street, which mounts very steeply; farther up were shops, but all were full of silence. No one seemed to be alive within the dark openings on either side, though from the wares displayed

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it was evident that inhabitants were not far off; doubtless all sound asleep at this time of day.

At the top of the street on either side are tall old grey palaces; one of these, on the right, has a projecting roof, supported by long and beautifully-carved brackets. This is the Ospedale, with its curious door. On the left is the Palazzo Allemanni; over every door and window is the legend, *In Domino confido.*

The blue mountains, each range paler and more exquisite in tint as it rose behind another, were seen through a glimmering veil of sparsely-planted olives, and seemingly ended the street we were mounting; but, going on, we presently came out on the Piazza di Minerva.

Here is a fine, very ancient portico, supported by five columns of travertine, once the front of a temple to Minerva. Behind it is the more modern church of Santa Maria della Minerva. We were

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now on the site of old Roman Assisi, for the Forum lies below the Piazza, and one goes down steps to it. Formerly a flight of steps in front of the temple led to the Forum, and the effect must have been very fine ; now the artificially raised ground of the Piazza takes away from the apparent height of the portico, which has no longer so lofty a position in the general view as of old. It seems a pity that the space round it is not clearer.

Up a turning not far from the Temple of Minerva we came to the cathedral of Assisi, San Rufino, built by Giovanni da Gubbio in twelfth and early part of thirteenth century. It has an interesting brown façade and a picturesque campanile ; its three fine doorways and rose windows are full of beauty, but the interior is comparatively modernised, although a triptych by Niccolo da Foligno is worth seeing. There are many frescoes and pictures in Assisi, by Matteo da Gualdo,

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Tiberio di Assisi, l'Ingegno, and one at least by that rarely found master, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo. There are some in the small church of San Paolo, near the Temple of Minerva, some in the Palazzo Pubblico, and elsewhere. Beyond the Piazza Grande is the house wherein Metastasio was born.

But we found it difficult to detach our interest from Francis Bernardone, who is truly the moving spirit of Assisi, and, turning downwards to the right, we were soon in the little square of Chiesa Nuova. We knocked at the church door, and, after some delay, a very old monk, wearing the Franciscan habit, opened it.

He only nodded or shook his head in answer to our questions. The interest attaching to Chiesa Nuova lies wholly in the fact that it stands on the site of the Bernardone house. The shop of El Poverello's father is still preserved in the Via Portici. The high altar in Chiesa Nuova is supposed to

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occupy the place of the saint's bed-chamber; a side-chapel on the right is an unaltered room of the house, that in which his mother, Madonna Pica, dreamed her wonderful dream. The door is still standing at which, in her vision, the angel appeared to her, with the tidings that her expected child would be born in a stable; this is said to be a later invention of the Franciscans. There is a dark cave in the church, said to be part of the cellar in which his father imprisoned Francis to cure him of his so-called fanatical follies. It looked dismayingingly dismal. He was probably flung in here on his return from San Damiano. The little Piazza before the church was not that which witnessed the young saint's renunciation of the world, and heard his memorable vow. That scene took place in front of the now decayed romanesque church of Santa Maria Maggiore, near the Bishop's palace. This was one of the churches partly restored by St. Francis,

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who rebuilt its eastern end. It was probably on the Piazza here that Francis flung down money and clothing, and, sheltered only by the Bishop's mantle, borrowed the serge garment of a rough countryman, and began his new life.

Francis, when he left the Piazza, was free. He at once set to work to repair San Damiano, begging bricks and other needful materials from the more charitable of the citizens. He next restored another chapel in the neighbourhood ; this completed, he fell to work on the wayside shrine to which his mother had often taken him as a child, the well-known chapel of the Little Portion of St. Mary, or, as it is to this day called, La Portioncula.

It belonged to the Benedictine abbey on the heights of Subasio, whence a priest occasionally came down the mountain to celebrate mass for worshippers. Francis found much comfort in this service, and it was a delight to him to restore with his own hands

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the little building to a weather-proof condition.

One day the Gospel read by the officiating priest greatly impressed Francis ; it seemed to him that the life he was leading could not be altogether pleasing to God, because its aim was only the saving of his own soul : he ought surely to incite others to share the light he had received. From this time there began in him that intense hunger after souls which was, next to his love of God, the chief motive-power of his life. He had once been pre-eminent in folly, and by his vainglorious and prodigal example had led many souls to sin : he was bound, he decided, not only to submit himself joyfully to every trial, as a means sent to subdue his will and his self-pleasing nature, but he must try to prevail on others to follow the same discipline.

His character seems to have developed with every fresh demand on

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his exertions, a development caused not so much by impulse, as by a humble feeling that he had not done nearly enough to prove his penitence.

He walked to Assisi, and began to preach in its streets. He at once attracted listeners ; disciples soon followed.

The first of these was a wealthy noble, called in the *Fioretti* and elsewhere in connection with Francis, Bernard di Quintavalle. This nobleman, also called in the *Fioretti*, "Bernard of Assisi, who was of the noblest and richest and wisest in the city," wisely began to take heed unto St. Francis,—how exceeding strong must be his contempt of the world, how great his patience in the midst of wrongs, because albeit abominated and despised for two whole years by everyone, he seemed yet more patient; Bernard began to think and to say to himself, "This could not be, unless the Brother has the fulness of God's grace." He invited the preacher that evening to sup and lodge with him, and St.

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Francis consented thereto. . . . Thereat Bernard set it in his heart to watch his sanctity, wherefore he let make ready for him a bed in his own proper chamber, in the which, at night-time, ever a lamp did burn. And St. Francis, for to hide his sanctity, when he was come into the chamber, incontinent did throw himself upon the bed, and made as though he slept ; and likewise Bernard, after some short space, did lie him down, and fell to snoring loudly. . . . St. Francis, thinking truly that Bernard slept, rose up from his bed, and set himself to pray . . . "My God, my God" at intervals through the night. When morning came, Bernard professed himself ready to become a follower of the new teaching. Francis, though overjoyed in his heart, told his convert that this was a task so great and difficult that it behoved them to seek for Divine guidance in the matter. He proposed that they should go together to the Bishop's house, and find there a

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good priest he knew ; and, after mass had been said for them, that the priest, at the request of Francis, should open the missal thrice and read each time the words at which it opened.

At the first opening the words were, “ If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast,” etc.

At the second opening the words were, “ Take nothing for your journey,” etc.

At the third, “ If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.”

Bernard at once obeyed Christ’s words : he sold all his possessions, distributed his money among the poor and suffering, and went to live with El Poverello, as Francis was called, in a small hut not far from the lazар-house. The house of Bernard still stands, also the room in which the friends talked ; it is now called Palazzo Sbaraglini, and is in the same street as the home of Clara Scifi.

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The next convert who came to seek Francis in the hut, to ask leave to share his labours in tending the lepers, was the learned Pietro di Cataneo, a canon of the cathedral of San Rufino. The third was Fra or Fratello Egidio, called in English "Brother Giles," a poor labourer, who proved to be one of the most remarkable of the group termed by Francis his "Knights of the Round Table." Egidio seems to have been willing as well as able to set his hand to any work he was asked to do. Besides helping to tend the lepers, these men begged their daily bread in the streets of Assisi, and Francis preached constantly, sometimes in several adjacent villages the same day, so fervently that crowds flocked to listen.

The number of penitents soon increased, and, seeing this, Bishop Guido of Assisi, at first so kind, grew jealous of the new power of the penitent brothers. He advised Francis to join either the Dominican community, or

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the Benedictines, a branch of whom had already established themselves on the heights of Subasio.

“Your present life,” the Bishop said, “is impracticable.”

Francis answered that, “as the Bishop knows, money is at the root of all quarrels, therefore I and my brother penitents, wishing to live in peace, prefer to be without it.”

As time went on the number of penitents increased. Francis was perplexed how to dispose of them; he felt also that if he could gain the Papal sanction the power of his mission would be strengthened. He resolved to make a pilgrimage to Rome, in order to ask Pope Innocent the Third to consider his Rule, and to give it his approval.

Eleven of the brothers went with him cheerfully to the Imperial City, singing hymns of praise as they walked. They were received very coldly: it was considered that such a dusty, travel-

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soiled handful of men, with so small and insignificant a leader, could not have the capacity to found a new Order, and that its Rule of Poverty, Obedience, and Chastity was unseemly and preposterous.

But when at length Francis was admitted to the Pope's presence, Innocent saw in the face of his suppliant something that pleaded too powerfully to be resisted, and, after a little more delay, against the advice of his worldly, pleasure-loving cardinals, he gave his sanction to the objectionable Rule, and named the new community, The Order of Brothers Minor.

They quitted Rome as soon as they could ; they seem to have suffered much privation on their homeward journey, so that they were glad, as they approached Assisi, to find and take refuge in a small, empty dwelling at Rivo Torto, near the leper-house.

They established themselves here, but their number increased so rapidly

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that they soon outgrew their quarters, and were shown that they were unwelcome guests.

When he found that he and his followers could no longer live by themselves at Rivo Torto, Francis went to Guido, the Bishop of Assisi, and begged to be allowed the use of an oratory, or of any chapel, in which he and his brethren could say the Hours of Prayer. He was told that no such building could be allotted him; and, almost weeping with earnestness and baffled hope, Francis climbed the side of Subasio till he reached, near the top, the abbey of the Benedictines. As this side of the great hill belonged to the Abbot, the kindly man, who seems to have fully sympathised with Francis, granted him the chapel of "the Little Portion of St. Mary," to have and to hold for his own.

At once the overjoyed Francis and his disciples, as has been said, set to work and built themselves huts to dwell in, near their place of worship.

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Next to the rapidity with which the new Order made its way, its most remarkable feature was its social aspect.

In those days, when the haughty nobles and the still more haughty Church dignitaries seem to have ignored the existence of the peasantry, we find in the Franciscan brotherhood, from its beginning, a complete union of all classes. Its first four members were a canon, a nobleman, a rich merchant's son, and a labourer.

The Palazzo Scifi, in which the future Santa Chiara (the first member of the Second Order founded by St. Francis) was born, is only a very short distance from the church, afterwards built on the site of the old San Giorgio, and called, in memory of the Abbess of the Poor Clares, Santa Chiara.

On his return from Rome, when it became public talk that he had received tonsure, with the Pope's sanction to his Rule for the Order of Brothers Minor,—Frati Minori, as they were

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called,—Francis found himself in much higher favour with the Assisans.

Instead of the street preaching he and his Brothers had daily practised, he was offered the pulpit of San Giorgio ; but that church was found too small for the multitudes who flocked to hear El Poverello, he was therefore invited to preach in the cathedral of San Rufino. This was considered a great honour, and it fixed public attention on the founder of the new brotherhood.

It was in San Rufino that this beautiful young girl, named Clara Scifi, daughter of the powerful Count Favorini Scifi, as despotic as he was powerful, heard the new preacher. Listening with rapt attention to these new doctrines of Poverty, Obedience, and Chastity for the love and glory of God, and in imitation of his life, the girl contrasted this teaching with the life lived around her. This new way, the way of the Cross, opened out to her a new revelation.

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At that time, her father, a cruel and violent despot, had just laid his commands on her, his elder daughter, to wed a young noble of Assisi. While the girl listened to the saintly preacher, her heart and mind were deeply stirred ; she determined to ask the Poverello's advice in her trouble. How could she follow out the purpose that had formed in her heart, that of leading the life he pictured, if she wedded the husband destined for her by her father. Her mother, the Lady Ortolana del Fiume, a daughter of the Fumi, those hated enemies of the Baglioni of Perugia, and rivals of the Nepi of Assisi, was a devout and good woman. But Clara shrank from consulting her on this subject, lest she might breed discord between her parents ; she therefore opened her heart to her aunt, Bianca Guelfucci, who seems fully to have sympathised with her niece's perplexity.

Francis was sorely troubled when the

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trembling girl sought him out at the Portioncula, and begged him to advise her. He said she must not act rashly, she must prove the reality of her vocation before he could counsel her to take the veil, and thus withdraw herself from her parents' guardianship. He bade her wrap herself in a sackcloth robe, with a hood drawn over her head so as to conceal her face, and thus, clad like a mendicant, beg her bread from door to door through the town of Assisi. Clara did this secretly; but it only added to the fervent strength of her vocation, and finally Francis consented to her wish.

On the night of Palm Sunday the girl quitted the Scifi Palace, and, accompanied by her aunt Bianca Guelfucci and a waiting-maid, went rapidly out by the Porta Nuova, and across the starlit plain. As they drew near the little brown chapel, surrounded by a thick wood, they heard the Brothers of the Poor chanting a Psalm, and,

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waiting till this had ceased, the trembling Clara knocked on the door and asked leave to enter.

Francis bade her come in, and he questioned her a little, then bade her kneel; she obeyed, and took the vows he prescribed, after which he cut off all her golden hair and laid it as an offering on the altar. When her companion had wrapped her in the veil and sackcloth garment of the Order, El Poverello led her and her aunt, through the dark night, to the way they had to follow to reach the convent of the nuns of San Paolo, about an hour's distance from Assisi. He told her that she would there be safe from persecution.

This Second Order of Franciscans was called, when Clara had established herself at San Damiano, the Sisterhood of "the Poor Clares." Her sister Agnes soon joined Clara, provoking the stormy displeasure of her father and her uncle, who was savagely cruel in his treatment of this young girl. The

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church of Santa Chiara was built after Clara's death by Fra Campello, in red and cream-coloured marble. It has a graceful campanile, and the flying buttresses are very remarkable ; they spring completely across the pathway beside the church.

The building was begun in the year after Santa Clara's death, but the nuns remained at San Damiano for fifteen years longer ; then the body of their foundress was removed to Santa Chiara, and they took up their abode in the convent adjoining the church. There are interesting pictures in this fine building, especially in the chapel of San Giorgio, and by this date the chapel probably contains the famous and very ancient crucifix brought here from San Damiano, before which Francis was kneeling when he heard the voice bidding him rebuild the ruined houses of God. This crucifix was, I think, when we saw it, in the convent of Santa Chiara, but we heard

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that it would be placed by the altar of the chapel.

Santa Chiara was built on the site of the old church, San Giorgio, the first burial-place of Francis, but it is not clear how much of the original edifice was spared by Fra Campello when he designed the new building ; there is much mention of the older church in the *Life of Francis Bernardone*. Clara was buried in the chapel of San Giorgio, but her tomb there was not discovered till 1850.

There was great rejoicing in the town at this discovery ; her remains were carried through Assisi with much splendour of ceremonial, and were followed by an immense procession. The coffin was reburied in a crypt made to receive it in front of the high altar, reached by a double flight of steps. The public are permitted to go down to view the body of the saint in a glass case ; candles are ever burning before it.

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We did not, however, visit the crypt, and our gentle-faced conductress seemed surprised by our lack of devotion.

When we set out to visit San Damiano, and again passed by the church of Santa Chiara, we noticed the contrast of colour between the rose-tinted church and the brown convent walls.

We followed the road till it reached a gate on the brow of the hill. Here is a lovely view over rugged hill and fertile valley, wilder and more picturesque than any we saw from Perugia. A breeze had sprung up; now and again a light purple cloud-shadow varied the rosy tint of Subasio, already darkened in places by ravines that gaped in his rugged side, while the glint of a mountain rill showed here and there like a stray gem on the grassy tufts that helped to mark its course. Leaving the gate, we went down the steep descent on the right, between silvery veils, the deep valleys being clothed

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with olive-groves ; their pale leaves gleamed in the sunshine against bright green berries, and ancient trunks so gnarled and shrunken that we wondered at the abundant crop of fruit overhead. Huge brown patches glowed like velvet on these grey trunks ; and through the silver veil we saw ranges of hills in varied shades of blue, a more delicate tint indicating the valleys that lay between them.

There was not anywhere a hope of shade, unless we climbed the bank and walked on the rough ground under the olive-trees, but these did not grow closely enough to give shelter worth having, and the road under foot being fairly smooth, we trudged downhill in the sunshine.

The way proved longer than we expected. At last, concealed among trees, we found San Damiano.

We rang a bell beside the entrance ; after a long pause, our summons was answered by a beautiful young

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Franciscan, who showed us about very courteously. He first took us into the quaint little chapel, and pointed out an ancient crucifix ; he told us how an angel had come during the night, and had carved the unfinished head of the figure. He showed us on the right of the entrance the hole below the window into which St. Francis flung the money gained at Foligno by the sale of his possessions ; also, he showed the little cracked bell with which Santa Chiara summoned her Sisters to prayer.

It is interesting to learn that, though she ran away from her father's house at night to adopt a religious life, Clara's mother, the Lady Ortolana, after Count Scifi's death, was received into the Second Order, and joined the community under her daughter's rule, then called the Poor Ladies of San Damiano.

Behind the little chapel is the choir of the nuns, left just as it was when Santa Chiara died. The refectory on the other

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side of the cloisters is also unaltered, and above it is the dormitory of the nuns ; at the end is Clara's cell. Every step makes the poetic history more real. There is still the little garden in which this sweet, brave woman took daily exercise, and tended the flowers she so dearly loved.

When we came out we found the artist of our party sketching. Beside him was a small boy about seven years old, a curiosity as to clothing. He had on part of some ragged knee-breeches, the remains of a shirt, and a portion of a straw hat ; he seemed a bright, intelligent little fellow. He was very much interested in the sketch, and delighted to be talked to in his own language. Between his praises he held out a grimy little hand, in a saucy, smiling way.

Said the artist, " How much would you like, my man,—would a hundred lire suit you ? "

The urchin grinned all over. " Si,

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Signore, I should much like a hundred lire, but I would take less!"

We went back up the olive-bordered hills to the pleasant little inn, which seems to hang over the lovely valley behind the house. Just before reaching Hotel Subasio there is a picturesque view looking upwards, the great convent and churches of San Francesco towering above us.

Even apart from the touching interest with which the story of St. Francis invests the little town, Assisi is delightful, so many churches and religious houses exist there, full of picturesque charm is the exquisite setting of landscape beyond and around them.

Wherever one looks between the old grey houses, one sees the valley full of rich colour, and the far-off, softened outlines of the hills. The town on market-days is very bright and cheerful.

It is a steep climb up to the old grey castle, the Rocca di Assisi; it sits there crowning the hill like a falcon in its

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eyrie, the little town beneath its feet ; and what a wonderful prospect it dominates !

To the west is Perugia, on its group of hills ; eastward glistens many another town, sometimes sheltered in a hollow of the hills, sometimes standing out as Foligno does on the plain beyond.

Behind the castle there is the wildest of ravines ; Monte Subasio is full of strange nooks and glens, of which the most interesting is that of Le Carceri, the group of cells built in the mountain caves by Francis and his brethren. He retired here for prayer and penance when he found his life at the Portioncula distracting. Close by is the little mountain stream of the Tescio, and the ilex-wood in which Francis held discourse with the nightingale.

In thinking and writing about St. Francis, one forgets the history of Assisi. Till the Roman invasion of Umbria, this history seems chiefly traditional. Dardanus is said to have built Assisi

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before he built Troy; in consequence of a dream that came to him while he lay sleeping on the slope of Subasio, he founded the famous Temple of Minerva, and the city grew up round it.

Goethe greatly displeased the Assisans by journeying to their city only to see this temple; he passed by San Francesco without so much as entering the church.

The number of subterranean passages leading to the Rocca from all parts of the town seems to prove that the little city greatly needed shelter from surrounding foes.

From the time that the Etruscans possessed themselves of a large part of Umbria, and built the city of Perugia, Assisi was constantly persecuted by this powerful neighbour, till the Romans overspread the country, conquering the Etruscans, and the grim, hitherto unconquered city of Perugia, burning most of it to the ground.

In the Middle Ages, Assisi had frequently to submit to the despotism

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of great leaders of Condottieri and others who bore rule in Perugia,— Galeazzo Visconti, Biordo Michelotti, Forte Braccio of Montone, Nicola Piccinino, Sforza, and others. Before these, however, Charlemagne is said to have taken the city and utterly destroyed it. After its destruction, the citizens built walls around their new town, they also built the castle on the hilltop. This was at one time occupied by Frederick Barbarossa, and then by Conrad of Suabia and other despots.

The two noble houses of the Fiumi and the Nepi, one being Guelph and the other Ghibelline, though less blood-thirsty than the Baglioni and the Oddi of Perugia, seem to have been constantly at strife till the advent of St. Francis, who prevailed on them to live more peaceably.

Later on there was again terrible strife and carnage in Assisi, and when his lordship the Magnifico Gianpaolo Baglione took upon himself to settle

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matters, famine and misery almost destroyed the inhabitants of the brave little city. Miss Lina Duff Gordon, in the chapter called "War and Strife" of her charming *Story of Assisi*, gives a vivid account of this siege.

CHAPTER XIII

ASSISI—SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGELI



is better, perhaps, after visiting Chiesa Nuova, to go next to St. Mary of the Angels at the foot of the hill, instead of visiting San Francesco, the saint's memorial church; for at the Portioncula, within the walls of Santa Maria, Francis lived and worked and died. Most of the Brothers whose names have come down to us were received into the Order within the walls of the little chapel.

The vast baldness of Santa Maria's nave, rebuilt less than a hundred years ago, in consequence of the damage caused by an earthquake, was very

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uninteresting, but at the east end is the brown Portioncula, the home of Francis and of his first followers; for the little chapel remained uninjured when the earthquake shattered the walls of the outer church.

The dark walls of the Portioncula are covered with votive offerings, and over the entrance is a fresco by Overbeck. Looking within, it is difficult to imagine how the events recorded in the *Fioretti* could have found room to happen in the tiny place.

On the right is a chapel, the site of the cell of St. Francis; his portrait is over the altar, and there are frescoes of his companions. Our guide, a Franciscan, looked as if he had come direct from the thirteenth century, but he had not brought thence the warm, loving glow that must have radiated from the founder of his Order.

The great interest of the place is its story. The Portioncula was a well-known shrine, and had existed for years

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before Francis restored it from its ruinous condition. It has been told how, when he was a child, the saint was often taken by his mother to the little chapel, and prayed there beside her. Two years after he renounced his home and his father, Francis was kneeling here in prayer when he received his second inspiration. According to his biographers, he hastily rose, and, taking up a bit of cord near at hand, tied it round his waist, as the outward badge of the Order of Poor Brethren.

Our guide's scanty hair stood erect, and his red-veined blue eyes stared at us, as the Gorgons did in the Etruscan tomb. At first he would scarcely speak. He may have thought heretics would not appreciate his information. When we came to the little rose-garden outside the Chapel of the Roses, and talked to him about flowers, he thawed ; he told us how an unbelieving English traveller had begged a rose-tree, so that he might try it in English soil,

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and how next year the Englishman had written to say that the rose-tree was covered with thorns; whereas at Santa Maria degli Angeli, these roses, brought here from St. Benedict's monastery near Subiaco, have been thornless ever since the day when St. Francis carried the original bushes from the Benedictine garden at Il Sacro Speco, and planted them here.

Our guide said we ought to pay our next visit when the roses were in blossom, "a sight to be met with in no other place." He took us into a chapel, where, under the altar, is the den into which the saint retired for penance—a most wretched hole; then we went into the sacristy, to see a Perugino. In another little chapel is the portrait of El Poverello, a very remarkable face, painted on a plank which once formed part of the saint's bed. There is a terra-cotta statue of him by Andrea della Robbia.

We went back to the church, and looked again at the Portioncula. In it

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Clara, or Chiara, took the vows, and here her beautiful hair was shorn from her head by St. Francis. Other memories of Santa Chiara cling about this church of Santa Maria. Perhaps the Third, or universal, Order was here determined on. The space outside has never been built on, because it was here that the memorable meeting took place between Clara and St. Francis, in answer to her repeated petitions that they might eat bread together. The meeting is very quaintly described in *I Fioretti*. Clara had often asked for this privilege; this time the Brothers seconded her request, and Francis granted it. He had, as soon as was possible, obtained for her the little church of San Damiano, and had built up little huts beside it for her and the poor ladies, who so soon joined her community. Clara passed the rest of her life among the Sisters, and died Abbess of the "Poor Clares" of San Damiano.

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The community of Brethren met on the open space twice yearly ; the great chapter of the Order convened by St. Francis eleven years after its beginning, recorded in the *Fioretti*, took place on this vacant ground. The number of the brethren must have increased very rapidly, for several thousands came over the hills and along the valleys from far-off parts of Italy to look their founder in the face, and to receive his instructions and his blessing. Among others came San Dominic, with some of his followers, and the Bishop of Ostia, Cardinal Ugolino, afterwards Pope Gregory IX.

The space occupied by Santa Maria must have been covered by the village of huts built by St. Francis and his Brothers. In an old map, these huts are shown built at regular distances on three sides of the Portioncula ; among them is one larger than the rest, probably the Refectory or the Infirmary of the Brothers. Doubtless they lived here a

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happy family life, though Francis began early to send them out to found branches of the Order in other directions. The first sent away from the nest-like home was Bernard of Quintavalle, to Bologna ; here he had to suffer insult and persecution, but he soon won many converts by his preaching, and established a community of Brothers Minor in that city, over which Francis appointed him guardian. This enterprise was repeated over and over again, with success, till, in his hunger after souls, several years later, El Poverello set forth with a couple of Brothers to Damietta to convert the Soldan, who is said to have permitted him to visit the Holy Sepulchre. His visit failed in its object, but it is spoken of by Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Acre, as a fact.

He was never tired of exhorting his brethren to live joyfully, so as to make others happy. Their cares and the sorrow for sin which would from time to time beset them, they should, he

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told them, pour out to God in their prayers ; he also exhorted them to live always according to the Rule of the Order.

The Popes seem to have troubled him by their persistent efforts to persuade him to alter the extreme simplicity of this Rule, and to assimilate his teaching with that of the other Orders. But St. Francis, always most humble and gentle in his denials, pleaded so earnestly and so sweetly for the original lines on which he had begun, that he succeeded in gaining his point both with Innocent the Third, and his successor Honorius. Even his dear friend Ugolino, the Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, tried hard, when he succeeded to the Papacy as Pope Gregory the Ninth, to convince El Poverello that union with the Dominican Order would be a gain to the Church, but the saint's sweet humility at last conquered Ugolino. These discussions, however, which made needful journeys to and from Rome,

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involved much loss of time, as well as mental weariness, and wore out his decreasing strength.

He was, after a time, constantly suffering, but always cheerful and uncomplaining. His greatest trial seems to have been the tendency he saw, especially in the more recent converts, to relax the strictness of the Rule in regard to Poverty; when he heard, during a journey which would take him past Bologna, that larger and more comfortable houses had been built for the Brethren there, he at once showed his displeasure by passing by the city without stopping to greet the Franciscans therein.

He always returned with fresh joy to the Portioncula, and his life there with his dear sons; a hard life, supported by the work of their own hands.

The gentle saint seems to have had plenty of dignity when called on to rebuke a wrongful act; we see this in his dealings with one of his early converts, Brother Juniper, that delightfully

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simple but most indiscreet of the Minor Brothers, yet of whom Francis said, after pondering on his simplicity and patience in the hour of trial :

“Would to God that I had a whole forest of such Junipers.”

Indeed, on that day Brother Juniper was in sad disgrace with the other monks. He was visiting a sick Brother, and, being afire with the love of God, asked the sick man with much compassion, “Can I do thee any service ?”

Replied the sick man :

“Much comfort would it give me if thou couldst get me a pig’s trotter.”

Straightway cried Brother Juniper :

“Leave that to me ; you shall have one directly.”

So he went and took a knife from the kitchen, and in fervour of spirit ran through the wood in which certain pigs were feeding ; he threw himself on one of them, cut off its foot and ran away. Returning to the house, he washed and dressed and cooked the foot ; and

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when, with much diligence, he had prepared it, he brought the foot right lovingly to the sick man.

And the sick man ate it up greedily, to the great comfort and delight of Brother Juniper, who with glee told his invalid how he had made assault upon the pig.

Meanwhile the swineherd, who saw Brother Juniper cut off the foot, went and told all the story to his lord, who, when he was ware of it, came to the house of the Brothers, crying out that they were hypocrites and thieves and knaves.

"Why have ye cut off my pig's foot?" he shouted.

At the noise he made, St. Francis and the Brothers came out, and with all humility the saint made excuses, and promised to make reparation for the outrage.

But for all that he was no whit appeased, but with much insult and threats went away from the Brothers, full of anger.

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And St. Francis bethought him, and said within his heart, “Can Brother Juniper in his indiscreet zeal have done this thing ?”

He called Juniper to him secretly, and said :

“Didst thou cut off the foot of a pig in the wood ?”

Whereat Brother Juniper, not as if he had committed a crime, but as if he had done a deed of charity, answered cheerfully :

“It is true, dear Father, I cut off that pig’s foot. Touching the reason why, I went out of charity to visit a sick Brother.” He then narrated the facts, and added, “I tell thee, Father, that, considering the comfort given by the said foot to our Brother, if I had cut off the feet of a hundred pigs as I did of one, in very sooth methinks God would have said, ‘Well done.’ ”

Whereat St. Francis said very severely, and with righteous zeal :

“Brother Juniper, why hast thou

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caused so great a scandal ? Not without reason doth this man complain of us ; he is perhaps already noising it in the city. Wherefore I command thee, by thy obedience, that thou run after him till thou come up with him, and throw thyself on the ground, and confess thy fault, promising to make such satisfaction that he may have no cause to complain of us, for of a truth this has been too grievous an offence."

Brother Juniper marvelled much at the words, being surprised that anyone should be angry at so charitable a deed. He answered :

" Doubt not, Father, that I will straightway pacify him ; why should he be so disquieted, seeing that this pig was rather God's than his, and that great charity hath been done thereby ? "

Francis was constantly journeying about, preaching in all the villages through which they passed, as well as in the castles which frowned down on them, founding new houses of the

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Order in and near the larger towns; he travelled great distances, and carried everywhere with him the element of joy, showing it forth in the lovely hymns which he and his Brothers carolled along the high-road to lighten the fatigue of their journeys.

Reading the *Fioretti*, one feels intimately acquainted with several of the Brothers Minor,—with gentle Fra Leone, “the little sheep of God”; with Fra Rufino, styled by Francis “one of the three most holy souls in the world”; with Fra Masseo, who seems, in one recorded instance, to have affected incredulity in regard to the saint’s humility.

In those days the Portioncula and its village were surrounded by a wood, and St. Francis often said his prayers therein; one day as he came from them, he was met at the entrance of the wood by Fra Masseo of Marignano, a man of much sanctity, discretion, and grace, for the which cause St. Francis loved him much.

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Said Masseo, “ Why to thee ? Why to thee ? Why to thee ? ”

Quoth Francis, “ What is thy meaning ? ”

Brother Masseo answered :

“ I say, why doth all the world come straight to thee ? and why do all men long to see thee, to hear thee, and obey thee ? Thou art not a man comely to look at, thou hast not much learning, thou art not noble : whence is it, then, that to thee the whole world comes ? ”

Hearing this, St. Francis, all overjoyed in spirit, lifting up his face to Heaven, stood for a great while wrapped in meditation.

Anon returning to himself again, he knelt him down, and rendered thanks and praises unto God ; and then with great fervour of spirit he turned him to Brother Masseo, and said :

“ Wilt thou know why to me ? Wilt thou know why to me ? Wilt thou know why to me the whole world doth run ? This cometh unto me from the

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eyes of the most High God, which behold in every place the evil and the good : for those most holy eyes have seen among sinners none more vile, none more lacking, no worse sinner than I. . . . Therefore hath He chosen me to confound the nobleness and the strength and the greatness and the beauty and wisdom of the world, to the intent that men may know that all virtue and all goodness come from Him, and not from the creature, and that no man may glory in himself ; but whoso will glory may glory in the Lord."

He often told his Brothers they must never forsake the Portioncula, which he and they also so dearly loved. But his strength was almost spent, and when he was only forty-two, two years before his death, he appointed Brother Bernard vicar-general of the Order, so that he might give himself up more completely to meditation and prayer before the end came.

He had founded a community near

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Rome, and appointed a good and discreet Guardian thereto ; but this Brother seems to have had some difficulty in controlling the outbreaks of Brother Juniper, who had been sent to this Roman home.

There came a time when all the other Brethren had to go out.

Quoth the Guardian, "Brother Juniper, we are all going out ; see to it that when we return you have cooked a little food for the refreshment of the Brothers."

Replied Brother Juniper, " Right willingly ; leave that to me."

Said Brother Juniper to himself, " It is a pity that one Brother should always have to be in the kitchen, instead of saying prayers with the rest. Of a surety, now that I am left behind to cook, I will make ready so much food that all the Brothers will have enough for a fortnight, and the cook will have less to do."

So he went with all diligence into the country, and begged several large cook-

SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGELI

ing pots ; he got also meat, fowls, eggs, vegetables, and firewood in plenty ; then he put all the eatables in the pots to cook, to wit, the fowls with their feathers on, the eggs in their shells, and so with the rest.

After a while the Brothers came back to the home, and one of them going to the kitchen, saw many great pots on an enormous fire ; he sat him down and looked on with amazement, but said nothing, watching the care with which Brother Juniper did his cooking, and how he hurried from one pot to the other. Having watched it all with great delight, the Brother left the kitchen, and, finding the other Friars, said to them :

“ I have to tell you Brother Juniper is making a marriage feast.” But the Brothers took his word as a jest.

Presently Brother Juniper lifted the pots from the fire, and rang the dinner bell. The Brothers sat down to table, and he came into the refectory with his dishes, red-faced with his exertions.

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Quoth he, “ Eat well, and then let us all go and pray : no one need think of the kitchen for a while ; I have cooked enough food for a fortnight.”

And Brother Juniper set his stew on the table. But there is not a pig in the whole countryside that would have partaken of it.

Then Juniper, seeing that the Brothers did not eat thereof, said :

“ These fowls are strengthening for the brain, and this stew is so good it will refresh the body.” But while the Brothers were full of wonder at his simplicity, the Guardian was wroth with the waste of so much good food, and reproved him roughly.

Then Brother Juniper threw himself on the ground and humbly confessed his fault, saying, “ I am the worst of men.”

After this he went sorrowfully out of the refectory. The Guardian, touched by his humility, asked the Brethren to be kind to Juniper, who had, with good intentions, erred through ignorance.

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Such pity had Brother Juniper for the poor, that when he saw anyone ill-clad or naked he would at once take off his tunic, and the cowl of his cloak, and give it to the beggar.

Wherefore the Guardian commanded him that he should give to no poor person his tunic or any part of his habit.

Now it happened that a few days after, he met a poor man half-naked, who asked alms for the love of God.

"I have nothing," quoth he, "I could give thee save my tunic, and my Superior hath enjoined me not to give it to anyone, but if thou take it off my back I will not say thee nay."

He spoke not to the deaf, for straightway the poor man pulled his tunic off his back and went away with it.

And when Brother Juniper returned to the house, and was asked what had become of his tunic, he answered—

"A poor man took it off my back and went away with it." His charity had become incessant.

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More than once our gentle saint had visited La Vernia, a bleak and rugged mountain some four thousand feet above the Casentino valley. On these occasions, his friend the Count Orlando Cattani of Chiusi, had caused a hut to be built for him near the hilltop. On this last visit, Francis felt a pressing need of solitude, so that he might more entirely give himself to prayer. He took with him the three men who are said to have written the charming sketch of him, called, in the French version of it, *La Légende des trois Compagnons*, Fra Leone, Fra Masseo, and Fra Angelo.

When they had travelled for two days, Francis became so weak he could go no farther, so the Brothers found a peasant with an ass, and persuaded him to lend it to their teacher. In doing this they gave his name, Francis of Assisi.

The peasant was greatly impressed, for, throughout Italy and beyond, this name was a name of power ; some way

SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGELI

up the mountain of La Vernia, or, as it is also called, Alvernia, the peasant leading the ass said to its rider :

“ I hear that you are Francis of Assisi ; well, then, I will give you a bit of advice : Try to be as good as people say you are, and then they will not be deceived in you.”

For answer Francis scrambled down from the ass’s back, and, kneeling before the amazed peasant, he thanked him with all his heart and soul for his counsel.

There is a plateau at the hilltop surrounded by pines and huge beech-trees, but before reaching this the whole party was so exhausted by the long climb in the heat of August sunshine, that they sat down to rest beneath the spreading branches of an oak-tree. The birds, accustomed to live in solitude, came fluttering round them, and settled especially on the shoulders and head of St. Francis.

When they reached the top, Francis bade his companions stay in their cus-

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tomary refuge while he went on by himself. He seems to have stayed alone, in a shelter contrived by the Brothers, for forty days, during which Fra Leone brought every night and morning some bread and water, which he left at the door of the refuge. A falcon used to tap at the door at dawn to awaken St. Francis. He is said to have received the vision of the Stigmata here on Michaelmas Day, and soon afterwards, leaving two of the Brothers in charge of the retreat on the mount, he took a touching leave of them, and of the place itself. He thanked the birds who had so lovingly welcomed his arrival, and especially Brother Falcon, as he termed it, for his daily summons.

, He then took his way, on horseback this time, with as little delay as possible, accompanied by his devoted Leo, till he reached the Portioncula, sorely exhausted and full of pain. Still he was bent on starting at once for the south, and seeking to win fresh souls for Christ.

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His strength rapidly decreased, and his sight had begun to fail him. He was advised to make a journey to Rieti, where Pope Honorius, being driven out of Rome, was then staying. The Pope had with him a famous doctor, who it was hoped might cure St. Francis. But he had not much faith in earthly remedies, and declined to go to Rieti ; when, however, St. Clare and some of the Brethren pressed him to spend a little time of rest and refreshment at San Damiano, he was glad to go there.

Though he was in constant suffering, he seems really to have enjoyed this visit. Saint Clare had caused a willow hut to be built for him in her garden, and though at night rats and mice tormented him, his joyousness and his poetic power returned with their early vigour ; for it was during these weeks of peaceful outer life, though blind, and suffering from hæmorrhage of the lungs, that he composed his famous Canticle.

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It happened that one day, while seated at table in the refectory of San Damiano, before the meal began, Francis seemed all at once to be wrapped in a kind of ecstasy. When he roused from this, and became fully conscious, he exclaimed, " May God be praised!"

He had just composed the Canticle of the Sun.

" Altissimu, onnipotente, bon signore,
tue so le laude, la gloria, e l'onore et
onne benedictione.

Ad te solo, altissimo, se konfano
et nullu homo ene dignu te mentovare.

Laudate sie, mi signore, cum tucte
le tue creature
specialmente messor lo frate sole,
lo quale jorna, et illumini per lui ;
Et ellu è bellu e radiante cum grande
splendore ;
de te, altissimo, porta significatione.

Laudato si, mi signore, per sora
luna e le stelle,

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in celu l'ài formate clarite et pretiose
et belle.

Laudate si, mi signore, per frate
vento
et per aere et nubilo et sereno et onne
tempo,
per le quale a le tue creature dai susten-
tamento.

Laudato si, mi signore, per sor acqua,
la quale è multo utile et humele et
pretiosa et casta.

Laudato si, mi signore, per frate focu,
per lo quale enallumini la nocte,
ed ello é bello et jucundo et robustoso
et forte.

Laudato si, mi signore, per sora
nostra matre terra,
la quale ne sustenta et governa
et produce diversi fructi con coloriti
flori et herba.

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Laudato si, mi signore, per quilli
ke perdonano per lo tuo amore
et sostegno infirmitate et tribu-
latione.

beati quilli ke sosterrano in pace,
ka da te, altissimo, sirano incoronati.

Laudato si, mi signore, per sora
nostra morte corporale,
da la quale nullu homo vivente po
skappare ;
guai a quilli ke morrano ne le peccata
mortali ;
beata quilli ke se trovarà ne, le tue
sanctissime voluntali,
ka la morte secunda nol farrà male.

Laudate et benedicete mi signore,
et rengratiate
et serviteli cum grande humilitate."

The following is the almost literal
rendering by Matthew Arnold :—

"O most High, almighty, good Lord
God, to Thee belong praise, glory,
honour, and all blessing !

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Praised be my Lord God, with all His creatures ; and specially our brother the Sun, who brings us the day, and who brings us the light ; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendour : O Lord, he signifies to us Thee !

Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, which He has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be our Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by the which Thou upholdest in life all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble, and precious, and clean.

Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, through whom Thou givest us light in the darkness ; and he is bright, and pleasant, and very mighty and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the earth, the which doth sustain us, and keep us, and bringeth forth

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divers fruits and flowers of many colours, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for His love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation ; blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for Thou, O most Highest, shalt give them a crown !

Praised be my Lord for our sister the death of the body, from whom no man escapeth. Woe to him who dieth in mortal sin ! Blessed are they who are found walking in Thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

Praise ye and bless ye the Lord, and give thanks unto Him, and serve Him with great humility."

He lingered many weeks at San Dami-an, being greatly refreshed by the sweet peace he found there, and his gentle and sympathetic talks with his early convert,

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St. Clare, who seems to have been as capable and practical as she was good and holy. After a while she persuaded him to journey to Rieti, and take the advice of the doctors.

At Rieti all those who had previously known him were greatly shocked by the change in his health. The doctors seem to have tormented him by their efforts to restore his sight, even branding his forehead with red-hot irons ; Francis bore all with the utmost patience and sweetness, striving to conform himself to the pattern set by his Divine example.

When he at last set forth to return home, he could go no farther than Assisi ; Bishop Guido had sent him a pressing invitation to stay in his palace, while a strong guard was appointed to protect him on the way, the fame of his sanctity having made him so precious that it was feared an attempt might be made to capture his poor suffering body.

His four most devoted followers

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nursed him through the weeks that followed, these were Leo, Angelo, Masseo, and Rufino.

He remained some months at Assisi, and amid his worst sufferings poured out such hymns of joy and thankfulness, that Fra Elia, who doubtless was already coveting the power that would so soon be in his grasp, remonstrated with the dying saint.

Sick persons, Elia said, were expected to edify others by their resigned and saintly demeanour, not by singing so loud that they could be heard outside the palace walls. Francis had often asked his companions to join in his songs; his own sweet voice had become feeble.

He had more than ever need of joy, for with the best intentions one of his most saintly companions was troubling his peace by recounting the changes worked in the simplicity of the Rule which Francis so dearly cherished: how larger monasteries were erected for

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the increasing communities, instead of the small, roughly built houses which he had always prescribed as suited for the abodes of begging friars; friars vowed to possess nothing of their own. Francis listened, but he had already seen these changes: he bade the Brother have faith and trust in God, and never to forsake the Rule or the Portioncula.

Soon after this he expressed a wish to return to the little shrine if he had power to make the journey, adding quaintly:

“ I cannot go so far afoot, my Brothers; you must be good enough to carry me.”

Half-way to the Portioncula he bade his bearers stop. Raising his hand, he gave his last blessing to the town of Assisi, which he could no longer see because of his blindness.

Soon after his arrival he asked Fra Leo to summon by letter the Lady Jacoba dei Settesoli, a widow who lived in Rome, being the mother of two Roman senators. He knew her devotion to him,

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and to the Franciscan Orders, and he feared she would grieve if he did not bid her farewell.

Just as the letter was finished, a trampling of horses was heard outside, and Madonna Jacoba appeared; she had felt anxious about her beloved teacher, and had set forth of her own accord to see him.

She was only just in time; very soon afterwards, having dictated his testament and received the last rites, he passed away.

All Italy mourned him, but the grief of the people of Assisi was indescribable. On the way to his burial place in San Giorgio the procession stopped outside San Damiano, so that Clare and her Sisters might come forth and take a last farewell of their revered Father.

The death of St. Francis has been well told by Miss Lina Duff Gordon in *The Story of Assisi*.

The more one studies the life of this gentle saint, who lived and worked for

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the love and glory of God ; the devotion shown in his ardour to save souls ; the practical help he gave to all ; his complete abnegation of self, and the happiness which he showed to be the duty of every one, the more one wonders at the frequent persecution of Franciscans. They seem to be best off at La Vernia. When we at last drove away from Assisi, along the dusty roads, which, to those who read the *Fioretti*, are full of flower-like memories of the sweet-natured saint and his favourite companions, Fra Leone, Fra Egidio, Fra Masseo, and others, the sun was setting gloriously ; Subasio glowed like a carbuncle as it reflected the gold and scarlet splendour opposite, and while this glow faded slowly into purple, the long line of the houses of Assisi blushed like a rose beside the mountain. We watched till the purple became a rich grey, painted with pale brown tints, while the sky just above the ridge of hills was palest green, changing into

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yellow above. Long lines of purple barred these delicate tints, and on the bluer, now cool, sky opposite lay rounded masses of white cloud with grey under-edges.

It was dark before we drove up the steep road into Perugia, and reached our comfortable quarters in the Hotel Brufani.

CHAPTER XIV

ADDIO PERUGIA

SEPTEMBER had nearly fled, yet the leaves in the Tronto garden had hardly begun to change colour ; the air, however, was now extremely cold as soon as the sun had departed. The wine-carts which daily thronged the streets warned us that the vintage would soon be over.

Day after day, as we looked from our windows in early morning, we saw flocks of sheep with their attendant shepherds, and herds of goats coming down in great numbers from the mountains. They trooped past our windows, and took their way along the dusty road towards the Maremma.

The poor, tired herdmen looked pictur-

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esque in ragged thin trousers and patched coats ; they wore high-peaked hats, and had a sort of make - believe appearance as they trudged along on foot behind their beasts. Every now and then came a padrone mounted on a mule, sometimes on a horse, with quaint trappings ; he always carried a long pole and a huge roll of green baize in front of him. We did not see any women or children, but we were told that the shepherds take their families along with them in these spring and autumn migrations, for they will go back to the hills as soon as winter is over. As we watched them we felt sadly that we too must soon say good-bye to Perugia.

One of our last walks was to Monte Luce ; and, coming back towards Perugia, we stopped and watched the sun set ; as it sank behind the purple, bleak hills the sky above them was blood-red ; higher up, stretched in long broad lines, was a mass of greenish slate-coloured clouds. On the right these were reft,

ADDIO PERUGIA

and showed a sea of golden glory ; while, still higher, clouds of paler grey sailed over a rosy veil that stretched itself across a sky of luminous green. As we went on, the blood-red tint paled and faded ; the clouds above took a darker hue, and loomed, with storm-laden, broken edges, over the deep valley that lay between where we stood and the projecting bastion, a view crowned by the weird tower of San Domenico. This stood up in startling vividness against the almost appalling gloom that had so quickly gathered.

Around us the view opened widely, the triple range of hills showed a sullen grey of differing tints ; on some of them, where the light was lurid with a tawny tinge, it was plainly raining ; yet, although thunder seemed imminent in the humid clouds that hung lower and lower over the valley, we were told that probably there would not be a storm at Perugia. Certainly, we had perfect atmosphere and perfect weather. The

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hill-city seemed to us in all ways very healthy—a place where winter and spring, summer and autumn, might alike be spent with charm and profit by those travellers who love the nature and art of Italy.

CHAPTER XV

LAKE THRASYMENE AND CORTONA



OLIVE
BRANCH.

most interesting part of the journey to Cortona is the view of Lake Thrasymene, with its reedy shores and islands, near the picturesque little town of Passignano.

As one leaves the station below Cortona, and mounts the hill to the grandly placed town, Thrasymene comes in sight again, and adds much to the beauty of the landscape. It is almost worth while to go to Cortona for the sake of the drive up from the station, and the exquisite view from the city walls, ponderous marvels of stone-work. But Cortona is not a desirable place to sleep

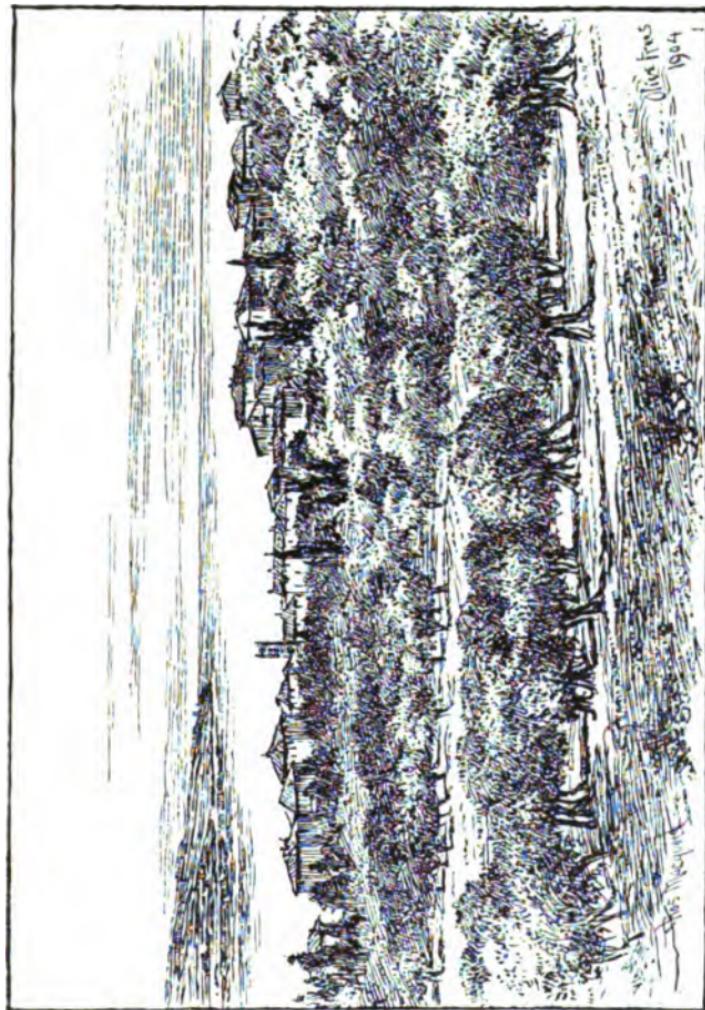
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in. The inn, when we stayed there, was not at all comfortable, and although the town is placed at such a height, the moss growing outside the houses tells how damp is the atmosphere.

If Perugia had seemed ancient, Cortona appeared antediluvian. According to the old historians, Perugia sent soldiers to fight against Troy, but Cortona boasts of having given birth to Dardanus, the founder of Assisi.

It was late afternoon when we reached the top of the hill, and when we took our way from the inn through the hilly, twisting streets to the Porta Colonia, the sun had already set, although the sky still glowed.

Lake Thrasymene looked pale and weird against the olive landscape. Before us was a deep valley backed by a warm, purple mountain ridge ; behind us was the stupendous Etruscan wall. We followed the course of this down the steep descent, for Cortona is built on the side of a rocky hill which yet



OLIVE-TREES, LAKE THRASYMENE.

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towers above it. The blocks of travertine in the wall are even larger than those at Perugia. Nestling between them, we found a wealth of ferns ; ceterach and several delicate aspleniums growing freely among these grim records of past ages.

Suddenly, while we were stooping to look closely at the ferns in the fading light, there came to us, as if from the clouds, a full-voiced chant ; deep organ notes swelled above the sweet tones of treble voices.

We looked up and saw that a convent is built above the walls. We stood for some time on this side of the hill listening to the aerial music. Behind us was the deep purple of the valley,—the vast plain below was changing into a brown olive, a wild, desolate-looking expanse ; but there was overhead a peculiar clearness of atmosphere.

The young moon hung high above the convent towers ; its light helped us to find our way over the rough ground, till at last we reached one of the city

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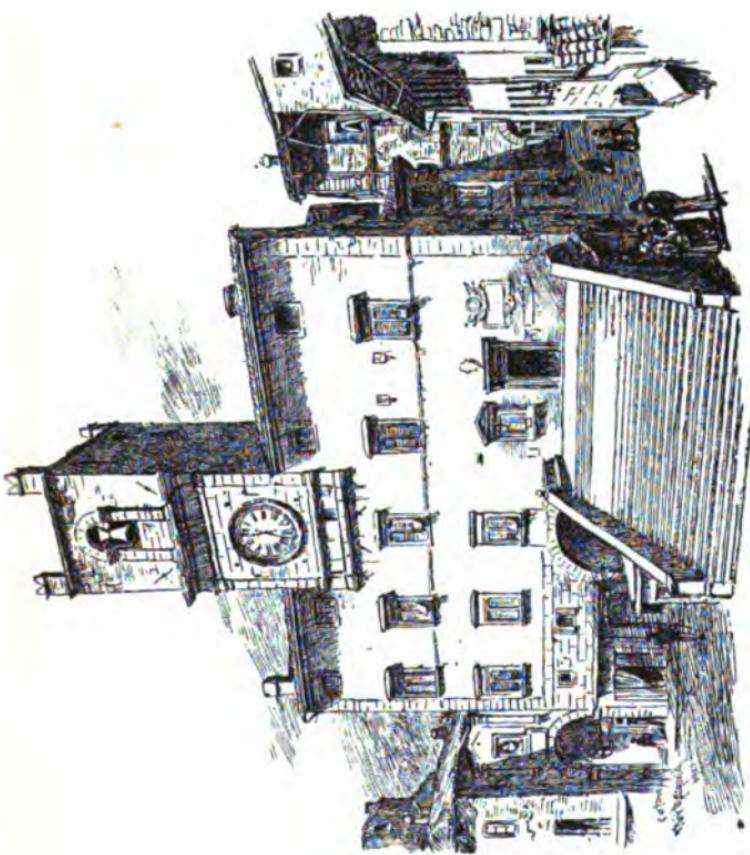
gates, and went back through the dark streets to our inn.

There was not a deserted or sleepy look about the place. People were gossiping and trafficking in the streets, and there were plenty of customers in the shop we went into.

Our bedroom at the inn looked alarmingly dismal ; large and lofty, it contained an enormous four-poster with a heavy, dark green canopy and curtains. Everything looked and smelt damp ; but when we asked to have the bed aired, our host said, "Such a thing is impossible at this time of year."

Next morning we found a busy market on the hilly Piazza. The town hall is here, and some women spreading out orange and scarlet handkerchiefs in the loggia above gave colour to the scene ; but the people looked somewhat squalid and dirty after our bright Perugians ; moreover, Cortona folk are indifferent and sometimes uncourteous to strangers.

We turned into a side street to see a



PALAZZO COMUNALE, CORTONA.

U

THRASYMENE AND CORTONA

fine palazzo ; then, crossing the market-place, went on to the Palazzo Pretoria. The walls of this building, both in the street and those round the inner quadrangle, are curiously decorated with small shields bearing the arms of ancient magistrates ; they reminded us of the Bargello walls in Florence.

We went upstairs, and were told that the custode of the museum was not in, but if we waited he would be sure to come soon. We had, however, to send more than one messenger in search of him before he appeared. There are many Etruscan and some Roman antiquities in this museum, but its chief treasure is the famous candelabrum. This holds sixteen lamps ; between each lamp is a head of Bacchus, while eight satyrs and eight sirens, placed alternately, form a marvellously rich border. Within this circle is represented a fight with wild animals, then waves and fish, with a Medusa's head as centre. The colour of the candelabrum, an

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exquisite mingling of blue and bronze, is beautiful. Near it is a painting on stone—a female—said to be very ancient.

After the museum we went into the cathedral; the pictures painted by Luca Signorelli for his native town are here.



BRONZE CANDELABRUM.

Luca was born at Cortona, and was a pupil of Piero della Francesca. Near the choir is a beautifully carved marble tomb, in which the people believe the Consul Flaminius was buried after the battle of Thrasymene.

We had not time to visit the baptistery

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opposite, which also contains pictures by Luca and by Fra Angelico. We were anxious to see the view from the church of Santa Margherita, above the town. Her statue stands just outside the cathedral ; a little dog crouches at her feet.

Margherita was not a native of Cortona ; she lived for pleasure only ; on her repentance she entered a Franciscan convent here, and passed a life of charity and holy penitence for her sins. Her conversion is said to have taken place on the sudden death of one of her lovers.

As he left her house, accompanied by his little dog, he was assassinated. The little dog came back to Margherita's house, and by its cries attracted her notice ; it then pulled at her gown, till it induced her to follow to where her lover lay dead. For this reason Santa Margherita is always represented with a little dog beside her.

We went along the road past the platform, where there is a fine view

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over the Chiana valley, and turned in to old San Domenico to see the pictures. The campanile of this church is a picturesque feature of Cortona. We could only see two of the pictures, neither of them very remarkable. Another was being restored, the custode said. The walk from this point up to Santa Margherita was delightful. The sunshine was brilliant, and the air had a delicious touch of autumn crispness. The way beside the wall is steep, but there are constant views over the country, and gradually, as we mounted, Lake Thrasymene revealed itself in pale blue-green loveliness; a projecting hill, however, partly blocks the view, and only allows about half of the lake's grand expanse to be seen. The yellow turf was gay with wild flowers, some of them rare specimens. When we at last reached the church, we were rewarded for our climb.

Santa Margherita was designed and probably built by Niccolo and Giovanni

THRASYMENE AND CORTONA

Pisano, but it has been very much restored; the view from its platform is magnificent. In front is a screen of tall cypresses, between which the purple hills show exquisitely. The spacious church originally designed by Niccolo Pisano has been re-modelled, but there is a beautiful monument to Santa Margherita by Giovanni Pisano. Santa Margherita's tomb reminded us of Pope Benedict's at Perugia. The saint lies sleeping with her little dog at her feet; in a bas-relief she yields her soul to angels, who bear it to Heaven.

The Fortezza behind the church is said to command a still finer view, but we were quite satisfied to sit on the flowery turf enjoying the surpassing loveliness below us. Hills and valleys, far-reaching plains, the still lake, and the sky overhead, seemed to vie with one another in beauty, yet to blend into such perfect harmony that the sensation of gazing was one of complete repose.

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Down a long, long flight of irregular steps we found our way to the quaint little church of St. Nicholas. While we sat gazing we had watched a woman go down these steps, so we felt sure they would lead us somewhere; they took us to the queerest little up-and-down village imaginable, a village of mendicants; every one begged of us, the children being very pertinacious.

One bright-eyed monkey of a boy, with bare brown legs and feet, and a red cap stuck over one eye, followed us down the broken way, dancing and chattering as he came. All at once he stopped and pointed to three younger children, sitting in a mud pool outside a cottage door, even more ragged and dirty, but quite as bright-looking as he was.

I asked him if he had a father or a mother, but he shook his head.

“Oimè, Signora!—io son padre di famiglia,” he said, with a merry laugh, and he pointed again to the black-eyed urchins.

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We joined in his laugh; his face and his tiny outstretched hand were irresistible. He shouted for joy when we dropped a coin into it; after this, at the end of every turning we passed, there was our bright-eyed, dirty little beggar, with outstretched brown hand and the sauciest of smiles. When we shook our heads at him he capered away, the soles of his slender brown feet almost as high as his head.

The little church of San Nicola is hidden away among the houses, with a quaint little grassed cloister court in front of it, and a row of ancient cypresses. On one side is a little cloister walk; a vine-covered pergola supported itself by filling up the small space inclosed. In the church is an altar picture, painted on both sides, this is said to be one of the last works of Luca Signorelli. The fresco, said also to be his, has been much restored. This little church belonged to a confraternity, and the seats still remain along the sides

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of the front court in which the Brethren have sat in council, or from which they have enjoyed the view over the wall that borders this quiet cloister.

As we drove rapidly downhill to the station, we looked at the country through a silver veil, for the olive-trees are larger here than at Perugia, and they literally cover the first part of the steep descent,—so steep that the road has to descend by terraces zig-zagged along the side of the hill.

We had told our red-haired, blue-eyed driver to take us to the Etruscan grotto, and he presently stopped at a rough break, with large stones placed so as to form irregular steps.

The man was in fear lest the horse should run away, and was greatly excited. He went on chattering patois to that effect ; but though I told him I was quite able to climb up by myself, he would stand at the top of the steps hauling me up with one hand and

THRASYMENE AND CORTONA

flourishing his whip with the other, as if he were performing a circus feat.

We left him there, and presently entered a solemn grassed avenue of gigantic cypresses, their pale grey stems gleaming in the sunlight. This avenue slopes upward, and at the end the ruined grotto shows between the lines of tall dark trees ; it is very curious, circular in form, with neatly finished compartments in it for the urns. These have all been taken away ; only part of the circular top of the sepulchre remains, lying near the ruined stone ; but even in its fractured state it is very impressive ; alone on the hillside, screened from the immense prospect before it by a surrounding of olive-trees. As we drove down to the railway, far below us, it seemed to us it had been quite worth while to stay at Cortona for the sake of this wonderful drive down the steep hillside ; but the town is probably safer from damp in August than we found it in October.

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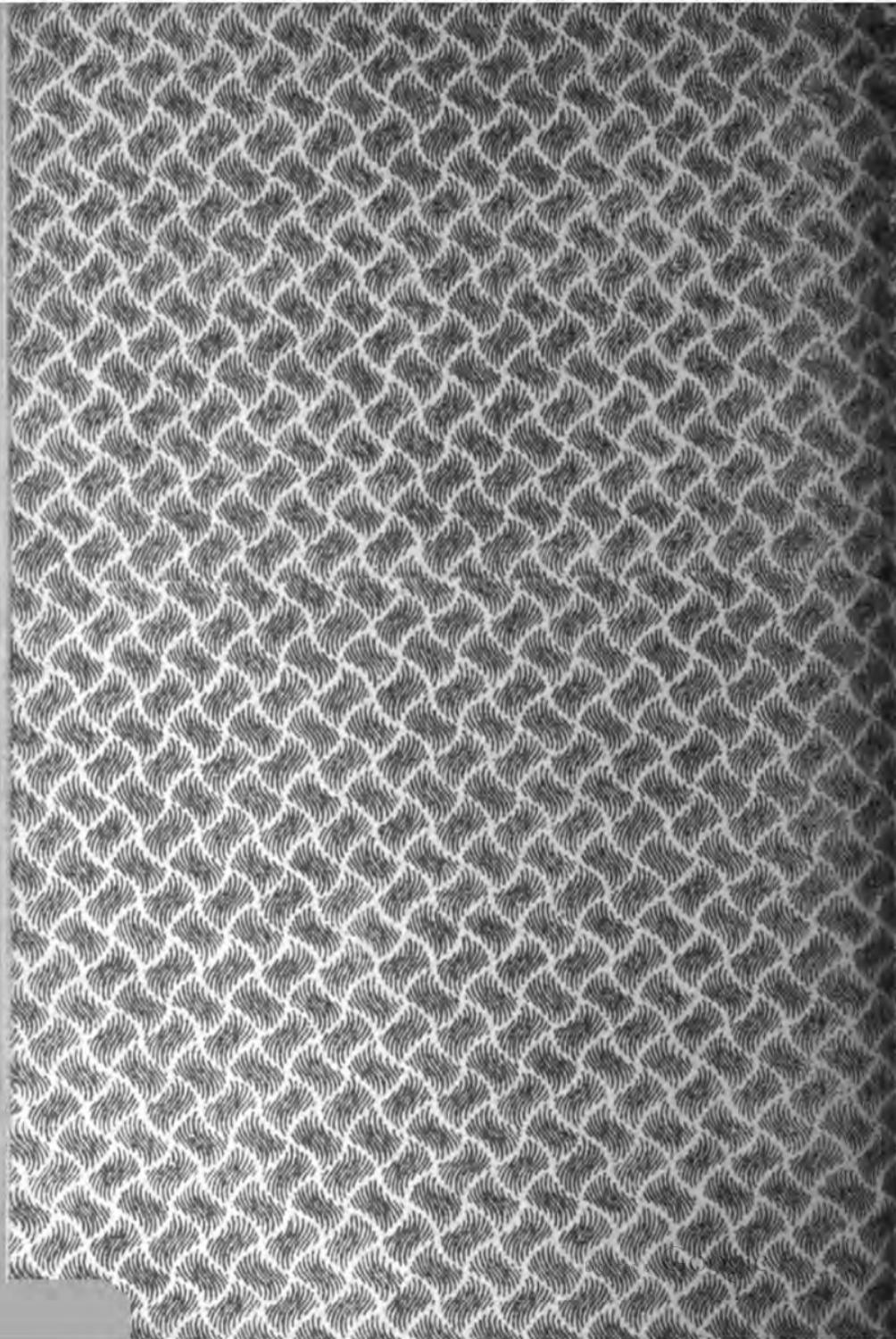
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